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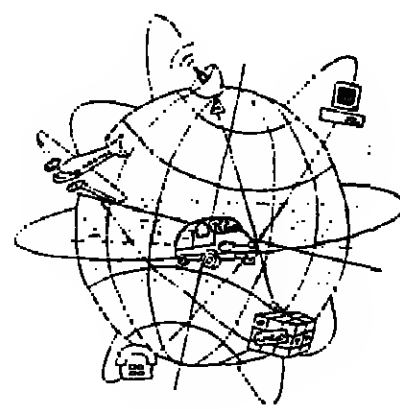
The Star

Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément au Star

La tension monte
dans les territoires
palestiniens

Voir page 8



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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

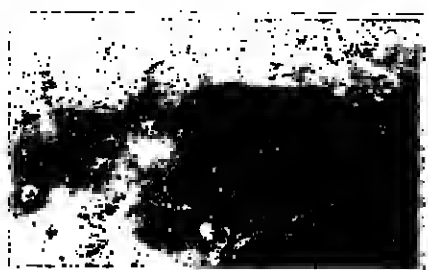
South African
perspective

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Multiple
faces of art

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US will
attend
Gaza
meeting
called
for by
Arafat

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—A crisis atmosphere thickened around Israel and its major Arab partners this week, with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat refusing telephone calls from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and King Hussein disparaging Netanyahu in extraordinarily anguished and personal terms.

President Arafat Tuesday tried to rally international support to stem a crisis in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process that has ballooned since Israel announced plans two weeks ago to build a new Jewish neighborhood in disputed East Jerusalem.

Arafat called on American, European and other backers of the 1995 Israeli-Palestinian interim peace agreement to attend an urgent conference in the Gaza Strip Saturday to discuss what he insists are Israeli violations of the accord. The US said it will attend the meeting.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy was furious in his response, warning that any attempt to bring international pressure on Israel could work against the Palestinians and freeze the peace process.

"I call upon all international parties to whom the Palestinians are appealing not to be dragged into this course of action and not to drive sticks into the wheels of the peace negotiations," Levy said. "Israel will not surrender to pressure."

Arafat extended the invitation to envoys from the United States, Russia, Japan, Norway, the European Union, Jordan and Egypt. The United States, which opposes the proposed Israeli construction but vetoed a United Nations condemnation of the project Friday, said it would send a representative.

"We do understand the

Continued on page 2

Israelis stunned at ferocity of King's letter to Netanyahu

By a Star Staff Writer

ISRAELI OFFICIALS were stunned at the ferocity of a letter sent by His Majesty King Hussein to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday.

The King's typewritten letter, initiated on every page and bearing his hand-printed correction, said Netanyahu's "accumulating tragic actions" are pushing "all Arabs and Israelis" toward "an abyss of bloodshed and disaster."

It accused Netanyahu of failing to follow through on promises made personally to the King, saying, "You cannot send me assurances ... and then renege on your commitment."

Jordanian sources said the King drafted the missive in a fury Saturday night after Netanyahu refused his request for permission to fly Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to Gaza from Amman. The King, who pilots his own royal Tristar jet, had offered Arafat a politically symbolic lift home, but Netanyahu—who has not permitted use of Dahaiya airfield in Palestinian-ruled Gaza—would not make an exception for the King.

"Now, suppose I had taken off nonetheless for Gaza, in the full right of a friend, then would you have ordered my fellow pilots in the Israeli air force ... to prevent me forcibly from landing or worse?" the King demanded. "You will never know how close you came to having to make a decision on the subject."

Netanyahu told reporters in Moscow, where he held talks with Russian President Boris Yeltsin, "There is no place for this criticism and certainly there is no place for this tone." He added, "I expect our partners and our friends in the peace process not to automatically adopt the Palestinian position. We stand on our right to build in Jerusalem, our united capital."

Netanyahu, in his written reply sent Monday, cast

himself as a leader who had "inherited a (peace) process that was failing" and "sought to revive it" by looking for agreements that could command the consent of Israel's political right. He said he was "huffed" by the "personal level of the attacks against me" in the King's letter. "I can only conclude that you are not being fully apprised of the true picture of the situation in Israel," he wrote.

Netanyahu's three-page response to the King sought to defend Israel's policies and called for Israeli-Jordanian relations and their own personal relationship not to be held hostage to Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. "We cannot make the Jordanian-Israeli relationship hostage to the Palestinian-Israeli negotiating track. We cannot give every Palestinian-Israeli impasse the power to hurt our own relationship," Netanyahu wrote.

On a personal level, Netanyahu wrote, "I have always appreciated the courage and resolve with which you have helped keep the peace process alive. I hold you in the highest esteem and I value your friendship and understanding. That is why I must confess that I am baffled by the personal level of the attacks against me."

The exchange of letters coincided with a short visit by Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai to Amman. After his meeting with King Hussein Tuesday Mordechai said that he had been able to smooth over tensions.

"In my eyes, and in the eyes of the King, we have to strengthen the process and progress and find all possible ways to overcome the obstacles," Mordechai told reporters. "I was very much impressed with the King's determination, faith, and readiness to help in every way in order to progress in the region to a totally different situation."

But Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti told reporters that the peace process

was facing a crisis and hinted that Jordan could suspend its moves to normalize ties with Israel.

"The peace process is going through a crisis, a real crisis," Kabariti said following his meeting with Mordechai, adding that the King would ask US President Bill Clinton to press Israel to reconsider its moves to build a Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem at a White House meeting set for March 18.

Later Kabariti told a special session of Parliament that "no normal ties can be established with Jordan ... so long as Jerusalem is targeted and settlements are being constructed."

Some members of the

Israeli Knesset launched an attack on Netanyahu Tuesday following publication of the King's letter.

"The prime minister has turned into a strategic threat on the security and well being of the state," Meretz leader Yossi Sarid was quoted by the *Jerusalem Post*. "He has completely lost the confidence of even those who were happy he was elected."

Knesset member Ran Cohen from Meretz called for a special and said "The prime minister's zigzag policy endangers the good, stable peace we have with Jordan."

Full text of King's letter on page 2

Jordanians stand behind government on Jerusalem

AMMAN (Star)—Jordanians reacted with anger to the latest Israeli decision to build a new settlement on Jabal Abu Ghazal. They expressed their full support to the stand of His Majesty King Hussein as pointed out in his letter to the Israeli Prime Minister.

Jordan considers Israeli practices in Jerusalem as "a clear violation not only to the Palestinian-Israeli peace treaty, but also to the Jordanian-Israeli accord," Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabariti told the Lower House's special session on Jerusalem. "Arab Jerusalem is an occupied Arab land which must be returned to Palestinian sovereignty," Kabariti added, "that any unilateral change in its status before the final status negotiations poses a serious threat to the entire peace process."

Opposition parties, professional associations and popular organizations are holding a festival of solidarity for Jerusalem this Saturday, 15 March at the Professional Associations Complex.

During Wednesday's special session of the Lower House on Jerusalem, 23 legislators called on the government to abrogate the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty. The opposition deputies said in a memo submitted to Lower House Speaker, Saad Hayel Al Sroor, that "Such practices by the Zionist enemy reconfirm its aggressive and expansionist nature, and its attempts to penetrate the Arab world...without any adherence to our rights in our lands and holy places."

Opposition deputies also called on the government to withdraw the Jordanian ambassador in Tel Aviv.

Other deputies also demanded that the government terminates relations with Israel and called for joint Arab

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British royalty launches web site—but don't wait up for Queen's reply

By William D. Montalbano

LONDON—Her majesty the queen is accessible, but she will not interact.

Visiting a public school in London last week, Queen Elizabeth formally inaugurated Buckingham Palace's royal home page on the Internet.

The official royal web site is: <http://www.royal.gov.uk>

The queen may be online, but the royal Windsors aren't talking.

There's no two way e-mail, although you can leave word in a visitor's book that you called.

Palace officials promise that the 150-page web site will offer quicker access to a wealth of information about Britain's royals than what is now available in a profusion of palace

booklets and fact sheets.

Illustrated with color pictures, the royal site promises to be a homework boon, offering information about the queen and her family, including facts and pictures about royal personages and palaces past and future, as well as a diary of royal activities.

The British Monarchy, The Official Website, says the page, showing a picture of the jewel studded coronation crown and pointing travelers to categories like Today's Royal Family. There are official biographies, photos and even a royal family tree.

With the merest of electronic cursors, browsers are admitted to the Royal art collection and to a section that answers frequently asked ques-

tions: Who was the last monarch to fight in battle? (George VI, the naval Battle of Jutland, 1916). How many people receive congratulatory sashes from the queen each year? (4,714 to centenarians and 10,817 to Diamond 165th) Wedding celebrants in 1905).

Mostly culled from existing documents, the information includes swatches of history, accounts of royal finance, public documents, statements and press releases. The release of the press Thursday announced the appointment of a 34-year-old assistant press officer to the queen.

The palace said the site would be regularly upgraded, probably for the first time with addition of the Queen's Commonwealth Day message next Monday.

"We regard the site as an important part of our public information work which will

make the monarchy more accessible, reaching a wider and potentially huge audience," a palace spokeswoman said.

The site is not expected to affect the queen's flow of snail mail, around 200 letters a day now, the spokeswoman said.

Under construction for more than a year, the site is being financed from the palace's publicity budget, a steady, image-promoting venture by a royal family whose standing has been damaged by divorces, too-public love affairs and a parade of lurid headlines.

Royal watchers have long had either access to unofficial information about the lives and times of the royals, with British publications regularly publishing Internet addresses for web sites ranging from serious to scurrilous.

A Guide to British Monarchs (<http://www.ingress.com/gaill/>)

Continued on page 2

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TV Guide

inside

The workings of the



inside

movies

The Empire's
new clothes



Despite slow
start and hype,
they delivered a
solid effort



cjc
Trend setters
for this
summer's
casual wear

King orders dramatic reforms in the country's political life

By Raed Al Abed

Star Staff Writer

THE TRAGEDY of children at an Amman orphanage, which distressed and angered His Majesty King Hussein, may be seen in the future as the spark that launched the momentum to reshape the next government and restructure the political system in the country.

Appearing on the local news show "Sixty Minutes" last Friday, the King made it clear what reforms he had in mind—especially when the issues of Parliamentary elections and the make-up of the cabinet are concerned. In the King's view there should be a distinct and legal separation between the posts of deputy and government minister, an issue which has bedeviled former prime ministers. The King also appeared to be moving away from the decades-old practice of regional representation in the cabinet. And last, but not least, the King reiterated what he had already instructed his Prime Minister to do a week ago, which is to ease the load on government agencies and bodies in order to create a more efficient government.

These reforms must be introduced and soon, the King emphasized. He made it clear that these tough reforms will make the core of the mandate of the next government.

The King appears to be ready to lead the way in the reform revolution particularly those relating to social welfare and the reduction in the number of state employees.

"Specialized committees will be formed to study ways to increase the productivity and efficiency of the administrative system, and to reduce the number of personnel," the King said on the TV show.

King Hussein left nobody out of the circle of criticism. Observers believe that he will keep his options open regarding the continuation of Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabariti in office.

"But if he [Kabariti] is afraid of braving the storms—God forbid, and I do not think this is the case—then we have to think of another solution," the King told his TV interviewer.

According to sources the King will soon dissolve Parliament as it has almost completed its four constitutional sessions.

Also the King wishes to hold early Parliamentary elections which could take place in September, according to senior government sources.

Election fever has already started in Parliament. There are already 50 deputies who have announced their intention to seek reelection, most of those remaining in the 80-seat chamber said they won't. The current government includes 22 deputy/ministers, mostly moderate centrists or pro-government deputies. A good number are expected to contest their Lower House seats and are ready to resign their cabinet posts once the Prime Minister gets the green light from the Palace.

Which brings us to the much talked about reshuffle. Informed sources say only 10 ministers in the current government will retain their posts, particularly the so-called technocrats who now hold the economy related portfolios.

The King's new approach concerning ending an unwritten rule about regional representation in government will be a major turning point. "I think it is not right," the King said. Ministers "should be the best and most qualified so that they can shoulder their responsibilities and perform their duties," he added.

All previous cabinets were composed carefully taking into consideration the balance that should be maintained between north and south, Muslim and Christian and Jordanian and Palestinian.

As usual, the King will be directly involved in choosing the members of the coming government. The Prime Minister has started to compile names of possible candidates that will make up his next ministerial team, which according to sources will not number more than 20.

Some ministers are expected to leave. Ministers of interior and justice, Awad Khleifat and Abdel Karim Al Dughmi, who are both deputies, will not be in Prime Minister Kabariti's new cabinet list.

Unconfirmed sources suggest

that the Minister of Higher Education Dr Abdallah Nsour will leave if he is not offered the post of Deputy Prime Minister. Also Minister of Tourism, Dr Saleh Irsheidat, and Minister of Youth, Mohammad Dawoudieh, will be going.

The four ministers without portfolios will also be sent home. State ministerialships were introduced by Dr Abdel Salam Al Majali when he was in office in 1993 to appease the different parliamentary blocs.

The Ministry of Higher Education will be swallowed by the Ministry of Education, while the Ministries of Culture and Youth will be merged into one. Official sources denied press reports that the Ministry of Supply will be abolished and not much is known about the fate of the Ministry of Information.

The coming ministerial team will be a mixture between what is termed as "security experts" and technocrats. The first group will be involved in paving the way for the coming elections while the second will be in charge of maintaining economic reforms and agreements reached with international organizations. Observers suggest that Kabariti will bring in political heavyweights to open the road for major electoral reforms including increasing the number of deputies to 100 from 80, creating a women quota—at least 20 women are being fielded to fight the next election and reducing the voting age to 18.

Weather Outlook

● Spring is in the air—almost. Temperatures will settle in the middle and high teens on Thursday and Friday and the skies will be sunny to partly cloudy. Unstable weather will affect the kingdom as of Saturday with a slight drop in temperatures. Easterly variable winds and local showers are expected on Saturday and Sunday. The weather should improve by mid-week. It will be sunny and warm in Aqaba throughout the week.

World
Report

Fund-raising campaign for cancer research shouldered by whole community

By Itham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

LOCATED in a 30,000 meter area in Amman, Al Amal Cancer Center is seen as a place that gives "hope" (which is its meaning in Arabic) and determination to those people who have cancer. The center is a national project that was the fruit of many years of hard work and contributions from many people and voluntary societies. It is a non-governmental and non-profit institution.

It is apparent from its motto, "the owner, Jordan's citizens, the Financier, All of us" that every dinar deposited into the Center's fund comes from genuine feelings from Jordanians and from others worldwide.

These people share the common aim of fighting cancer by hoping to find a cure for this fatal disease.

Not only is proper medical care required for persons with cancer, but it is important that the public become aware of what cancer patients are going through.

Fund-raising is the major push behind the center. In October 1992, Jordan Television had an all day "Telethon" to raise money for the establishment of the center. It was a huge success.

People from all over the country pledged contributions to the cause, and others flocked to the headquarters of the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) to contribute what they can afford, even small children participated.

The Director of the Al Amal Cancer Center Dr. Abdullah Al Khatib told *The Star* that "in 1992 we also had a marathon of 25,000 people who marched from the

Sports City to the projected headquarters of the Amal Center." He said that this proves that cancer is much more than a disease but it involves making people more aware.

Al Khatib points out that the center provides for early detection. This is done through screening units with satellites and mobile units to detect malignant tumors, especially of the breast, uterus, prostate, testicles and lungs.

"We are doing research on the disease that is attacking our children," Al Khatib added that there are many children waiting for the center to start.

The diagnosis of the disease is made through surgery, chemotherapy, bone marrow transplants and radiotherapy and brachytherapy.

The center also shoulders the responsibility to rehabilitate cancer-affected victims through a physiotherapy and rehabilitation program as well as psychosocial counseling for patients and their families.

But this is not all. It also contributes to international clinical research in the field of cancer besides co-operating in organizing training courses for doctors, nurses and other health care professionals.

The Al Amal center is planning to have satellite links with cancer centers around the world to benefit from their expertise and provide for the exchange of information and latest developments in cancer treatment and medical consultations.

There is also a growing sense of national responsibility for the center as exemplified by people's responsibility to donate to the center. In the 1992 Telethon, people donated about JD 7 million. Since then, the figures have been going up and total dona-

tion is today estimated at an impressive JD 11 million.

The center is also helped by GUVS, but other donations are coming in the form of loans from the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank, and a grant from the Netherlands.

The center has gradually started operations with the women's screening clinic, stop smoking clinic, healthy diet and weight control. However it is expected to be fully operational by the end of April.

But help and contribution is also coming in from different international sources. Canada, for instance, is the latest.

A cross country run is to be held in Amman on 25 April under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, HRH Prince Ra'ad, the Canadian Embassy in Amman and Al Amal Center.

More than 10,000 people from all ages are expected to take part in the run. These include students and representatives from clubs and other voluntary societies.

The event is titled the "Terry Fox Al Amal Center Run." Terry Fox is a Canadian athlete who died because of cancer in 1981 at the age of 23.

He suffered from bone cancer in his knee when he was 18. His leg had to be amputated to try and save him.

With an amputated leg Fox started his Marathon of Hope across Canada. However he was unable to continue as cancer spread to his lungs. After his death he became a symbol of sacrifice and determination.

Since his death, an annual run, in Canada and around the world, is held in memory of the young hero who insisted on fighting the disease.

Preparations for the run are currently under way. Last Sunday, a press conference was held at the Marriott Hotel. It was attended by Prince Ra'ad and the Canadian Ambassador in Amman, Mr. Michael Molloy.

Prince Ra'ad said we are all responsible for fighting this disease.

The route for the run will cover approximately 10 kilometers and participants are asked to run or march, but not use their cars.

"If one wants to do anything, he must do it properly to get friends joining the march or run, the Prince added.

Mr. Molloy told *The Star* that this disease doesn't have boundaries. Terry Fox has become a symbol of human suffering.

"Canada and Jordan share a common characteristic that is 'voluntarism,' which is the true measure of the spirit of people," Molloy added.

Canada has channelled \$168 million to fight cancer and provide fund for more research.

The question why Jordan has been chosen to be the destination for the Terry Fox Run, is because it has the first comprehensive center for cancer treatment in the region.

Al Amal Centre is a place where research and treatment go hand-in-hand to reduce the pains of cancer affected patients. Molloy said.

"Had Terry Fox been alive, he would have realized that his dream to find a cure for cancer came true. When he decided to run across Canada in 1980, Terry Fox called it the Marathon of Hope and Al Amal Center is really a place for hope."



Royal web site debuts—but don't wait up for Queen's

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offers basic historical information on all kings and queens, Britain's Press Association reports, while The Royals Network (<http://www.royalnetwork.com>) takes a satirical view of all things royal.

Diana, the divorced princess of Wales, is the most popular royal in cyberspace, the association says, recommending a link to several spots via <http://members.nol.com/douglasb52/links.htm>.

Two months ago, the British government beat the palace into the ether, establishing a web site that answers common questions about the operation of the prime minister's office at 10 Downing Street. The address is <http://www.number10.gov.uk>.

Like the new palace site, number10 is only supplying information for now. The addition of electronic mail is planned there later, though, a spokesman at the prime minister's office said last week. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Jordanians stand behind government on Jerusalem

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action to counter the Israeli violations against Arab rights.

On behalf of 41 deputies representing three Parliamentary blocs, and the National Constitutional Party (an alliance of eight centrist parties), Abdel Raouf Al Rawabdeh addressed the House's session. He said such Israeli violations "aim to derail the peace process. Further, he condemned the latest American decision to veto UN Security resolution against Israel."

Al Rawabdeh called on Islamic countries to hold a summit to support the Palestinian people and protect the Holy City from any attempts to change its features. The opposition parties reiterated their rejection of the peace treaties between Arab states and Israel. "The situation has reached the edge of a popular explosion to counter the Israeli-American hegemony," said Salem Al Nahass, general secretary of the leftist People's Democratic Party. "Such expected explosion moves Arab officials to announce their disapproval regarding the aggressive Israeli policies," Al Nahass suggested that what needed to confront the late developments is to "hold an Arab summit that reviews the American-Israeli settlement process (peace process) in a framework that safeguards the Arab national interests and rights."

Mr. Suleiman Arar, secretary general of Al Mustaqbal Party fully supported the King's stand expressed in his letter to Netanyahu. "The letter expressed our feelings," Arar said that we should strongly stand against Israeli attempts to Judaize Jerusalem. "The peace that they are crying for will not be settled without redeeming Arab Jerusalem."

In public remarks, Israeli officials held to their insistence that they will proceed immediately with construction at the site known to Israel as Har Homa. "There will be no backing down," said David Bar Ilan, chief of communications and policy planning.

In private, other officials showed the first signs of softness. One senior adviser noted that international pressure had forced former premier Yitzhak Rabin to abandon East Jerusalem building plans and said "I can't tell you" if that might happen again. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Text of letter sent from His Majesty King Hussein to Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu

Prime Minister,

My distress is genuine and deep over the accumulating tragic actions which you have initiated at the head of the government of Israel, making peace—the worthiest objective of my life—appear more and more like a distant elusive mirage. I could remain aloof if the very lives of all Arabs and Israelis and their future were not fast sliding towards an abyss of bloodshed and disaster, brought about by fear and despair.

I frankly cannot accept your repeated excuse of having to act the way you do under great duress and pressure. I cannot believe that the people of Israel seek bloodshed and disaster and oppose peace. Nor can I believe that the most constitutionally powerful prime minister in Israeli history would act on other than his total convictions.

The saddest reality that has been dawning on me is that I do not find you by my side in working to fulfill God's will for the final reconciliation of all the descendants of the children of Abraham.

Your course of actions seem bent on destroying all I believe in or have striven to achieve with the Hashemite family since Faisal the First and Abdullah to the present times. You cannot send me assurances that you would not

sanction any further construction of settlements and tell me of your decision to construct two roads to help all concerned Israelis and Palestinians alike and then renege on your commitment. In pushing matters to the point of securing a US veto at the Security Council, you have ill served the image and interest of your major ally and benefactor and our partner in peace making as the honest balanced peace broker.

Mr Prime Minister, if it is your intention to shovever our Palestinian brethren into inevitable violent resistance, then order your bulldozers into the proposed settlement site without doing much which is needed in recognition of Palestinian and Arab sensitivity, anger and despair and ameliorating the situation, then order the young Israeli members of your powerful armed forces surrounding Palestinian towns to commit wanton murder and mayhem, possibly resulting in creating a fresh exodus of hapless Palestinians from their, and their ancestors, homeland and bury the peace process for all times.

On the question of your withdrawal from territories you have committed Israel, before the US, Jordan, and the world, to complete the process by mid-1998, what good

did it serve to offer such an insignificant first phase withdrawal? Why the apparent continued deliberate humiliation of your so called Palestinian partners? Can any worthwhile relationship thrive in the absence of mutual respect and trust?

Why are Palestinians still confirming that their agricultural products still rot awaiting entry into Israel and export? Why the delay when it is known that unless work is authorized to commence on the Gaza port, before the end of this month, the complete project would suffer a year's delay? Finally, the Gaza Airport—all of us have addressed the subject numerous times with a view to having a legitimate Palestinian need met and to give their leaders and people their own free access to the world rather than their present confinement and need to exit and return through other sovereign territories.

I had requested permission and intended to fly President Arafat myself, in Jordan's official State Tristar, to the Palestinian airport of Gaza as I had requested earlier, during my Hebron intervention, to fly by a fixed wing aircraft, accepting your refusal then only because there were far more important issues at hand.

I anticipated your positive response this time. I believed

it would have helped improve the atmosphere considerably, but alas, it was not to be. Now, suppose I had taken off, nonetheless for Gaza, in the full right of a friend, then would you have ordered my fellow pilots in the Israeli Air Force—those who escorted me on the same aircraft over Israel in what became known as the "First Flight of Peace"—it seems so long ago—to prevent me forcibly from landing or worse?

You will never know how close you came to having to make a decision on the subject had I, on this occasion, not planned to carry guests back home. How can I work with you as a partner and true friend in this confused and confusing atmosphere when I sense an intent to destroy all I worked to build between our peoples and states.

Stubbornness over real issues is one thing, but for its own sake, I wonder. In any event, I have discovered that you have your own mindset and appear in no need for any advice from a friend.

I deeply regret having to write you this personal message but it is my sense of responsibility and concern which has prompted me for posterity to do so in the face of the unknown. ■

Sincerely,
Hussein

US will attend Gaza meeting

Continued from page 1

frustration of the Palestinian leadership," said State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns. "They've been buffeted by some fairly significant Israeli government decisions over the last couple of weeks. Chairman Arafat obviously feels the need to talk to friendly countries around the world, and that's appropriate."

A US official in Israel said a low-level representative most likely would be sent to the Gaza Strip, and that the international meeting was not expected to produce either a unified statement or a positive response from Israel.

Israel announced plans Feb. 24 to build 6,500 apartments for Jews on a hill in southeastern Jerusalem called Jabal Abu Ghneim. The Israeli government says it has the right to build anywhere in Jerusalem. Palestinians say the project is an attempt to pre-empt final-status negotiations called for in the peace accord and therefore violates that agreement.

Tensions between the two sides worsened Friday when Israel announced a plan to pull troops out of 9 percent of the West Bank during the first of three scheduled redeployments. Palestinian leaders wanted 30 percent of the West Bank handed over in the first redeployment.

Palestinian leaders charge that Israel is "negotiating with itself" and dictating terms to them. The Palestinians' chief negotiator, Mahmoud Abbas, and his team have offered to resign, although Arafat has not accepted their letters.

Israeli officials respond that Arafat is trying to create an atmosphere of crisis to press for greater territorial concessions from Israel. Arafat on Monday described Netanyahu's decision to remove Israeli troops from 9 percent of the West Bank—7 percent of which had been largely in Palestinian hands already—as "a trick and conspiracy against the peace process."

Political and diplomatic observers say Arafat is arranging the meeting in an effort to relieve the political pressure from Palestinians who feel the peace process is not producing adequate results.

Palestinian leaders, incensed at Israel's efforts to impose its will on matters they see as central to their ongoing talks, stepped up their warnings that the simmering violence could explode.

Nonetheless, Arafat does have regional support. King Hussein, sent a harshly worded letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu earlier this week criticizing his policy and warning the peace process may collapse if Israel builds the Jerusalem project.

And Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, in Washington for meetings with US officials, warned that violence in the Middle East and terrorism against the United States could escalate if the peace process unravels.

President Clinton said Monday that he realizes the latest US veto of a UN resolution critical of Israel could damage American credibility in the Arab world but said that he had to act to prevent the United Nations from interfering in negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

In a news conference after their White House meeting Monday, Clinton and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak agreed that Israel will put the peace process in jeopardy if it

goes ahead with plans to build a new Jewish neighborhood in East Jerusalem. But the two leaders disagreed sharply over the impact of Washington's veto of a Security Council resolution condemning the project.

Clinton said he is confident that the US veto, cast Friday to block a measure supported by the 14 other council members, would not be seen in Israel as a green light to build still more Jewish settlements. But Mubarak argued that, if the resolution had passed, "it may have given a signal" to the Israelis to stop any settlement activities, especially in the area of Jerusalem, which is illegal.

When an Egyptian reporter suggested that the veto would erode US credibility as a Middle East peace broker and damage Washington's standing in the Arab world, Clinton responded: "In all candor, I'm very concerned about that. ... I was very aware of how the veto might make the United States look in the Arab world."

Meanwhile, US officials reportedly have urged Israel to take "confidence building measures" to ease tensions with the Palestinians, such as to approve Palestinian plans for an airport and seaport in the Gaza Strip, open a route for Palestinians to travel across Israel between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and wait to break ground in East Jerusalem.

In public remarks, Israeli officials held to their insistence that they will proceed immediately with construction at the site known to Israel as Har Homa.

"There will be no backing down," said David Bar Ilan, chief of communications and policy planning.

In private, other officials showed the first signs of softness. One senior adviser noted that international pressure had forced former premier Yitzhak Rabin to abandon East Jerusalem building plans and said "I can't tell you" if that might happen again. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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Thursday, 13
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JD 10

In cooperation with
the Czech Embassy, Czech Airlines,
Motor Trade (Importer of Skoda Cars)
and Middle East Hotel

Monday, 17
8:00 p.m. Mar Tejas (Organ)
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The Star

Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly

in France...

The Star will publish a special French-language supplement to be distributed in France in cooperation with the Jordan Tourism Board during the activities of the Jordanian Season in France (March to August). The special issue will be published on 20 March and will provide Jordanian businesses with an opportunity to reach French public interested in Jordan. For more information about putting your message please call Mahmoud Fares on 645-380 or 652-380.

JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

King calls for improvement in living conditions of judges

His Majesty King Hussein instructed the government to improve the living conditions of judges by granting them special allowances. The King said these measures should be taken as soon as possible to ensure that "the judicial system in Jordan continues to serve as a model of integrity, independence and capable of shouldering its responsibilities."

The King pointed out that the judicial system should attract the most qualified and competent judges "who work conscientiously and bear their responsibilities with objectivity and courage, rising above any personal whims and material desires."

The King stressed the need for the government to take quick action to increase allowances for judges, stressing that the pensions of those who completed 30 years in service should not exceed their present salaries if they continue in their jobs; otherwise judges will be encouraged to quit their jobs and work as lawyers.

The judges had demanded that the government introduce measures to enhance the independence of the judiciary, amend legislation related to judiciary work and reform laws to ensure a comprehensive health insurance system for them and their families.

Mjalli wins JLA presidency

Former Jordan Lawyers Association (JLA) President Hussein Mjalli was re-elected to his post for another two-year term. This is the fourth time that Mr Mjalli holds the post of the association. The former deputy, standing on a nationalist ticket, won an overwhelming victory at 1238 votes. His main opponent, the Islamist Saleh Armouti won 991 votes. The Fatah-supported candidate, Zuhdi Al Disi failed abysmally at only 376 votes. However, the elections had to go into second round. Only 2450 out of 3138 registered in the association took part in the elections held last week. There are now 832 extra lawyers and 1187 trainee lawyers. What is interesting however, is the results of the elections to the 10-man executive council of the JLA. While the nationalists took six seats, the Islamists were hot on their heels at four seats, with one independent. This could suggest a long term trend for the Islamists, that they could very well come to overtake the historically nationalist dominated JLA in future elections. This is very real, after all, the Islamists do dominate other professional associations.

New president for human rights organization

Najeh Al Rashdan has become president for the Arab Human Rights Organization that held elections for its new administrative committee. Al Rashdan is a veteran lawyer, who was the chief judge of the Cassation Court. He also was the man who was in charge of drawing up the charter for the Institution of Freedom, Democracy and Human Rights Studies, that was quietly shelved. His appointment is likely to stir controversy because he is a staunch supporter of human rights.



Rashdan

Farewell Madadha

The recent resignation of Khalid Madadha as Minister of State at the Foreign Ministry opened up a can of worms. At first he would not give reasons for his resignation, then all of a sudden he blasted out at Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabariti calling him dictatorial. Indeed, this is not the first time that the Prime Minister has been in such a sticky situation. The first was with the Minister of Communication, Jamal Al Sarraf, who withdrew his resignation soon after he submitted it. The usual reasons were given. Madadha says that Al Kabariti patronized his ministers. The straw that broke the camel's back according to the minister was when the Prime Minister's secretary phoned his secretary asking her to tell Madadha to vacate his office because he wanted to come to the ministry to meet a number of ambassadors. Madadha said that Kabariti wanted him to go into another office in the ministry while he meets with the ambassadors. There is another view to this story of course and that is provided by government side. It claims that Madadha's resignation was because of family reasons, something that he strongly denies.

Blood relations!

Dr Abd Salem Al Majalli, former Prime Minister and architect of the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty, said that there was real unity between Jordanians and Palestinians based on blood relations and economy before 1948. He told the United Arab Emirates-based *Al Bayan* daily that the Al Majalli tribe, for instance, came from Hebron in the occupied West Bank. He therefore wondered whether the sons of this tribe can be labelled Jordanians or Palestinians since at that time a significant number of Palestinian families came to Jordan and the reverse is true of Jordanians. He said that since the Wadi Araba peace treaty, discussions centered on two categories of people: The 1948 refugees and the 1967 displaced persons. The former are from Heifa, Jafa and other cities, however, they have a problem. If they were allowed to go back, the majority wouldn't have anywhere to go to. Dr Majalli said that in his opinion the "individual from Haifa and Jafa would consider Nablus, Amman, and Irbid as the same since he can't return to Haifa." The second category are the 1967 displaced persons who came from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. He said that these people would return as soon as a viable Palestinian entity is formed, but if there is an opportunity for them to stay in Jordan, they will not return.

Car accidents: When will they learn

Jordan must have one of the highest car road accidents in the world. Last February 3550 road accidents around the Kingdom were registered. This means that every day there is an average of 117 accidents, about five of these occur every hour. Surprisingly only 36 people were killed while 1234 were injured. Most of the accidents, however, were direct hits between vehicles. Police sources said that most of these accidents occur because there is not enough room between cars, but nobody listens if only seems. Most of these accidents could be avoided if only drivers took enough care. There should be for instance at least two seconds between each car on the road.

Solidarity with the Holy City

Opposition parties, professional associations and popular organizations are holding a festival of solidarity for the city of Jerusalem this Saturday, 15 March at the Professional Associations Complex. Dr Saeed Thiyab will speak for the opposition parties while Islamic Action Front deputy Hamzah Mansour will speak on behalf of opposition deputies. Suleiman Arar, general secretary of the Al Mustaqbal, will also speak for the Arab political parties. Deputy Taher Al Masri is expected to speak for Beit Al Maqdes Society.



His Majesty King Hussein and PNA President Yasser Arafat inspect the guards of honor, Saturday. Mr Arafat paid a two-day visit to Amman to discuss the latest developments in the peace process and the consequences of the last Israeli decision to build a settlement on Jabal Abu Ghnein. The two leaders agreed to intensify all efforts to overcome the difficulties facing the peace process. King Hussein later sent a strongly-worded message to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warning him of the dire effects if Israel goes ahead with its plans. Mr Arafat left Amman on Sunday. (See front page story).

Ambassador Henry De Bruyn

'The South African "miracle" continues, although we are not without our problems'

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr Henry De Bruyn is Jordan's first South African ambassador. Born in 1931, he has long taken up the struggle for a post-apartheid South Africa. As a member of the African National Congress (ANC), Mr De Bruyn was an active diplomat on the international arena. He talked to *The Star* about South Africa's relations with Jordan, cooperation with the Arab world, and his country's relations with the rest of Africa.

How do you characterize Jordan-South African relations at the present time?

The relationship is warm and friendly, characterized by positive attitudes on both sides. Much work still needs to be done, however—trade could be improved, we would like to see larger numbers of tourists from each country visiting the other, and it should be possible to see increased cooperation in technical fields such as water management.

President Nelson Mandela was supposed to have visited Jordan last November. The visit was postponed then. Is another visit now on the agenda?

A visit by President Mandela to Jordan remains a high priority. I am not in a position to discuss dates at this stage as these are currently being reviewed by all the parties involved.

South Africa has recently agreed to sell Syria weapons to the tune of \$600,000 million. This has created controversy, but Mr Mandela was adamant that the sale should go through. Is this one way of South Africa showing international resolve and is it another way of gaining a foothold in the Arab region?

For the record, no contract to sell any defence equipment to Syria exists. The Cabinet agreed that a South African company could market its product—an electronic tank sighting system—in Syria. However, this does not imply that a sale is imminent, and it is expected that any tender for the sale of such equipment would only be issued between the years 1999 and 2000. If, at that point, the South African company wished to submit a bid, the National Conventional Arms Control Committee and the Cabinet would decide whether the South African company could in fact bid for the contract to sell. That decision would be based on the guidelines governing the export of conventional weapons, the prevailing situation in the Middle East at the time and the South African Government's firm commitment to support the peace process in

the region.

South African weapons sales are designed not so much to show international resolve, as to provide our many friends worldwide with the opportunity to purchase some fine technology for their legitimate defense needs. As far as the Arab world is concerned, we would see weapons sales as only one of many possible ways in which relations can be built, and are pleased to see the development of ties with this region in many fields of endeavor.



De Bruyn

can society. It is regarded as one of the most progressive constitutions in the world

How do you see South Africa's role in the African continent? People are saying that it has not made much headway with regards to greater cooperation and financial aid to other states, but has kept itself to itself. Is this a fair assessment?

Our relations with other African countries are a top priority. We are seeking to play a constructive role in multilateral forums such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). We have certainly not "kept ourselves to ourselves," as can be seen in South Africa's January 1997 agreement to mediate in the Angolan peace process and in more recent efforts to mediate in the Zaire conflict. Other examples of South Africa's engagement with Africa include South Africa's assumption of Namibia's pre-independence debt, and the fact that 75 percent of the 4 million tourists visiting South Africa from January to September 1996 were from other African countries.

Into the era of post-apartheid, how do you see the development of an integrated society in South Africa?

The South African "miracle" continues, although we are not without our problems. Race relations are very healthy, with our major challenge lying in the area of economics. The majority of our people were seriously disadvantaged during the apartheid era and it is the Government's highest priority to educate and enable all our people so that South Africans of all backgrounds can enjoy the fruits of our political freedom.

An important vehicle for achieving an integrated society is our new constitution. This was adopted last year, following submissions by literally millions of ordinary people from all strata of South Africa.

today, with a strong emphasis on human rights.

How do you see South Africa's role in a unipolar world dominated by one superpower?

South Africa has very good relations with the United States and that country is one of our most important trading partners. However, South Africa's foreign policy is made in Pretoria, not Washington, so differences of approach on some issues should not come as a surprise. Essentially though, regardless of the existence of any number of superpowers, the concern of our foreign policy is to promote human rights, democracy, justice and international peace across the globe.

Deputies start on election trail earlier than usual

By Hamdan Al Hajj

Special to *The Star*

AS THE constitutional term of the current 12th Lower House of Parliament approaches its end, a Royal Decree will be issued within the coming few days to terminate the session.

This will enable present deputies, particularly those who wish to stand for the next elections, to launch their electoral campaign earlier and go back to their constituents to get their support.

However, some observers expect that this House won't stay until the end of the constitutional term, that is till next 8 November, when a new Lower House would have been formed.

There is also a possibility that a Royal Decree can be issued to dissolve the current Lower House and hold early elections not later than September.

The Minister of Higher Education, Dr Abdullah Ensour denied any possibility of extending the term of the House. He stressed that there is a strong will to hold parliamentary elections on their constitutional date. Yet, elections could be held earlier, certainly well before next November. This step could be taken to make it easier for students and teachers to vote, Ensour said.

Earlier, opposition deputies in the House issued a statement asking the government not to dissolve the House. If such action is taken, then they threatened that they would take the government to the supreme court.

They also warned from the consequences of a "constitutional vacuum," if it takes place.

But well-informed government sources told *The Star* that it is too early to give final judgment on the issue. These sources stressed that the final decision lies in the hands of His Majesty King Hussein, when he returns from the USA (the visit will be during next week). The King will meet American President Bill Clinton. Upon his return, the main features of Jordanian internal and external policies would be more clearly formed.

On the external level there is the American stance towards Iraq, the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, and inter-Arab relations.

On the local arena, there are many issues awaiting decisive action, provided that Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti is given the green light from the King to prepare for a cabinet reshuffle. A number of problems need to be tackled such as administrative distortions, and malpractices of critical issues like unemployment, poverty and corruption.

This is in addition to another basic issue, that is the separation between the executive and legislative branches of government. According to this, the 22 deputy/ministers will not be included in the government. But, if they maintain their government posts, then they won't stand again for the Lower House elections.

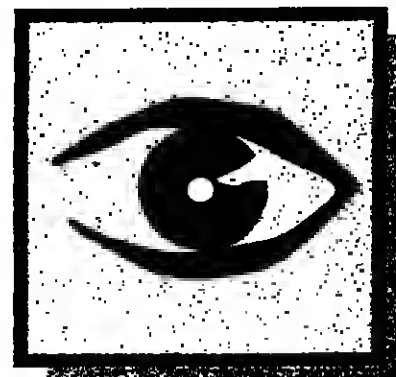
Mr Kabariti will brief King Hussein upon his arrival from USA about his changes. The King would then decide if the Prime Minister would remain in office or not.

The new government is expected to shoulder its responsibility in the coming stage, and must take bold decisions to reform the government system and deal with national issues more seriously.

During its course, the current Lower House has experienced many conflicts, partitions and divisions among blocs. Also, some deputies did not take the House seriously. One of the pro-government deputies, Abdul Raof Rawabdeh was particularly critical. He said that he already considered the House dissolved. Earlier he threatened to withdraw from the session. Also, the sole woman in the House, Tojan Faisal, left the sessions many times and boycotted other sessions.

But this is not all. Islamists and opposition deputies boycotted House sessions and considered that the dignity of the Lower House at times was compromised.

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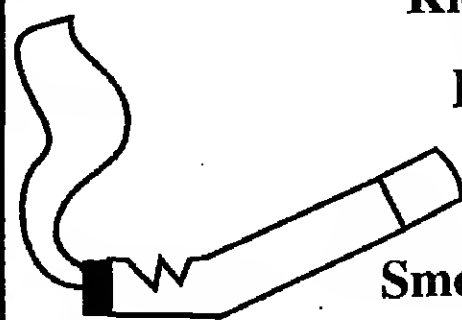
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LURIE'S WORLD



Egypt's President Mubarak visits the White House

Our Say...

Realities of the peace process

WHAT REMAINS of the Middle East process today? The process, launched in the wake of the Gulf War in 1991 by the Bush administration, was founded on the principle of exchanging land for peace under the pertinent UN resolutions. Washington, claiming to be an honest broker, assured parties to the process that the peace that will be sought will be a comprehensive and just one. Years of negotiations have brought about treaties, agreements, accords and letters of assurances—all underlying the fact that peace cannot be separated from land.

Many believed the peace process had died when a Jewish fanatic slained Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Others said the momentum will continue. Indeed, after a tense hiatus, the peace process was resumed and obstacles were negotiated resulting in the signing of the Hebron agreement two months ago.

But today and after six years since the convening of the Madrid conference, we are entitled to question the credibility of a process that is not leading us to a just and comprehensive peace. We must admit today that the peace process has its critics and that not all those who oppose it are against the principles of peace and mutual coexistence.

And we must admit that the majority of people today have deep qualms about the sincerity of the Israelis in negotiating in good faith and in fulfilling their commitments. Building settlements and building peace are two opposing and contradictory processes. The first is a guaranteed cause for the demise of the other.

Today, with a flamboyant Israeli premier holding the fate of the peace process in his hands, the rewards of peace are one-sided. Mr Netanyahu expects the Palestinians and the Arabs to be gracious for the bits and pieces he chooses to throw at them every now and then. The arrogance with which he views the other side is driving a wedge into the peace camp in the Arab world. He is a man who cannot be trusted and his myopia is providing the ingredients of a real disaster in this region.

No other party appears more guilty than Netanyahu than the Americans. Their arrogance is matched only by their compliance and collusion with the Israelis. Their disregard for international law, legal and moral obligations are a disgrace to all Americans and to what America used to stand for. Insult was added to injury after the US veto at the Security Council by President Clinton's patronizing words to the Arabs on how he still views the settlements in Jerusalem as illegal.

Arab indignation and frustration was echoed this week by Jordan through His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Kabariti. But it would be wrong for Israel and the United States to believe that the Arabs will get mad for a while before they learn to accept the new reality.

The new realities that Israel and the United States are creating in Jerusalem and the West Bank tantamount to unconditional surrender. The peace process today is only succeeding in legalizing and consolidating Israel's gains as an occupying and colonial power. The Arabs should ponder this and rethink their next move.



German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel receives a shield in Hebron from the mayor of the city, Mustafa Al Natshe, last Friday.

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A view from America

The UN, a patient that needs reviving

By Carrie Nette Moya
Star US correspondent

NOW THAT Boutros Boutros-Ghali is no longer the Secretary General of the United Nations, having been ousted by the US and replaced by Kofi Annan, an obedient technician rather than a charismatic statesman, there are few signs that anything at the international organization is about to change. The sick joke making the international diplomatic rounds is, "What is not wrong with the UN?"

All nations agree there is dire need to reform the UN, but the kind and extent of reform is far from being agreed upon. Third world countries see reform as giving them a seat on the Security Council with permanent representation, that is complete with the veto power of the Big Five (US, Russia, France, UK, and China), and by accepting India or Brazil as additional members of the exclusive club. They understand reform to mean additional funds and resources from the UN and major donors for development efforts, more input in staffing UN posts worldwide, and a greater share of contracts to supply the UN system at large and with services.

(Eighty percent of such contracts now go to Western countries, notably the US, Japan, and countries in Western Europe.)

Present inaction indicates that the United States see reform as a lean, mean robot-like machine: cheap (no feeding); obedient (no thinking capacity); highly productive (sans sleep, vacation, sick leave); requiring only periodic maintenance and occasional checkups.

In other words, it seems that the US seeks a tool, not a partnership. The US needs the UN as an instrument in reserve that can be removed from the closet when needed (Desert Storm) and when other instruments—bilateral contacts, unilateral dictates—are either too expensive or inefficient. That is why the US chose Kofi Annan to head the UN, a civil servant whose career over three decades, according to his detractors, has consisted of saying "Yes Sir." By the Third World, Annan is considered an Uncle Tom of the late 1990s, attired in an international mantle designed by a discordant political duo, Madeleine Albright and Jesse Helms.

To his critics, Annan's vocabulary has been enlarged to include, "Thank you sir, thank you ma'am," whenever he is chastised.

This is no defense of Boutros-Ghali, who certainly deserved his dismissal, but who still had moments of courage and initiative—and a lot of pride, to be fair—traits that were his undoing.

A third group of countries, mostly from West Europe and Japan, are more or less satisfied with the overall US strategy vis-

vis the UN, but demand a greater voice. Such include Germany and Japan in the club of the Big Five, making it six or seven, eight or nine, if and when Third World representation is admitted. For Europe and Japan, the UN is not so much an instrument of policy, but a channel to discharge tensions and distribute a pittance of develop-

menting universal child immunization that is peaking soon in eradicating polio, measles, and neonatal tetanus world-wide. Among other major goals, in September 1990, UNICEF managed to convene the largest ever summit of world leaders. The group produced the universal acceptance for the Rights of the Child, denoting it the model for all international organizations.

Now UNICEF, reflective of the condition of the United Nations per se, rapidly is sinking to become another unimaginative, bureaucratic, expensive self-praising caricature of its former self. Despite the continued availability of funds (\$1 billion-plus per year) it is using the pretext of austerity to retreat from essential development programs and acquire the dubious role of "advocate," "adviser," and "supplier," abandoning its long cherished role of agent of change for the better in the Third World and defender of children and mothers globally.

Advocacy, advice and finger-pointing are cheap, useless; yet, there is so much misery afflicting hundreds of millions of children in Latin America, Asia, Africa and elsewhere. Sick, hungry, exploited children and women need action, not bare advocacy.

A huge scandal of corruption that was exposed two years ago in the UNICEF office in Nairobi where over \$10 million were embezzled is but the proverbial tip of the iceberg. A majority of the dedicated senior aides who made the successes of UNICEF from the 1940s through the early 1990s possible (attrition, yes, but many recent firings) have been replaced by political appointees whose bureaucratic "yes-man/woman" attitude appears to be their greatest asset.

Where was UNICEF in Bosnia, Chechnya, Rwanda, and Burundi when the International Red Cross and other lesser known organizations were actively saving lives—notably those of children? UNICEF was hiding behind its now commonplace alibi, "This is not our mandate." What is the mandate of UNICEF if it is not saving the lives of mothers and children?

Mr Annan may do well by beginning his long-awaited reform in the UNICEF House, directly across the street from the UN headquarters. The complaints of Third World countries are easily ignored, thus it is up to the big donors—the US, Japan, and Europe—to couple their demands to Annan with a stern warning to UNICEF, the once-and-fallen-star, and other deficient UN organizations to reaffirm their dedication with action. This would signify a positive intent to reform the very sick United Nations.



KOFI ANNAN, U.N.'s new Secretary General

ment aid to the Third World.

Bilateral aid is falling out of fashion whereas multi-lateral assistance (through the UN, among others) is on vogue. But the UN is the best alibi for donors to become parsimonious by stating and pointing fingers: "The system of international aid cannot absorb more, regardless of how many millions starve or are massacred."

This is the convoluted logic that it is not the system that must be adjusted to fulfill the needs, it is the needs that must be

imposed to fit into the system. Sick!

The sickness of the UN today can be illustrated by what is happening to the once brightest star of the UN organizations, UNICEF (The Children's Fund). Since its inception 50 years ago, under the brilliant leadership of Henry Labouisse (as an aside, son-in-law of Marie Curie), until recently, it was the flagship of international development efforts, waving the banner of child survival, development, and protection of rights. UNICEF led the world in imple-

Palestine already is a state

Arafat must declare it to the world

By John Whitbeck

PALESTINIAN VIOLENCE and empty words of international condemnation are not the only possible responses to Israel's inflammatory decision to begin construction of huge settlements. Har Homa, in East Jerusalem. The situation presents an opportunity for the Palestinian leadership and the international community to dispel the dangerous illusions that the Palestinian lands conquered by Israel in 1967 are "disputed" rather than occupied and that Palestinian statehood is within Israel's power to grant or deny.

There long has been strange, other-worldly quality to the veil of words drawn across the face of Palestinian statehood. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the Likud Party's congress last fall: "You can dream every night and you will still wake up every morning and see: There is no Palestinian state. There is no Palestinian state. There is no and there will not be a Palestinian state."

Israel simply deals with the "Palestinian authority."

In fact, by the customary criteria of international law, there is a Palestinian state, proclaimed in 1988, and it is recognized as such by 124 other states that represent the vast majority of mankind.

The majority consensus view of the status of the Palestinian lands occupied by Israel in 1967 is today clear and (with the exception of expanded East Jerusalem, the only part Israel claims to have annexed) uncontested: The state of Palestine is sovereign; it is largely occupied by the state of Israel, and such occupation must end, being in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 242, which confirms the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war."

After the signing in 1993 of

the declaration of principles that began negotiations, Israel insisted on dealing with a "Palestinian Authority," of which Yasser Arafat is the elected president. Arafat emphasized the most important of his titles, the one still listed first in his Arabic correspondence: President of the state of Palestine.

Negotiating with prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, who as reasonable person could at last hope were negotiating in good faith, he presumably made the political judgment that the occupation was likely to end sooner if he did not thrust the state in the faces of his Israeli counterparts but rather let them adjust to it gradually as mutual confidence increased.

When, last spring, the Labor Party dropped its opposition to a Palestinian state from its election manifesto, the gentle approach appeared to be working. Today, with a fully functioning government—executive, judiciary, security forces, and democratically elected legislature—in place in Palestine, the veil labeled "Palestinian authority" has become transparently ludicrous.

While the world play may once have been necessary to the advancement of peace, this clearly is no longer the case. Polls show that a majority of Israelis now are willing to accept a Palestinian State. Indeed, in mid-December, Netanyahu's chief advisor and spokesman, David Bar-Illan, said in a Jerusalem Post interview that the Prime Minister could accept a Palestinian state if Israel's security needs were adequately assured "they have foreign relations. They have embassies," Bar-Illan said. "If they declare a state tomorrow, I'm sure that the whole world will recognize it." This stunning reversal of positions provoked no signifi-

cant public outrage.

Surely the time has come for the Palestine leadership to drop the veil to affirm that the state of Palestine exists, on the soil of Palestine and apply to upgrade Palestine's status at the United Nations from observer to member state. At the Security Council level, China and Russia already recognize the state of Palestine. The strong public statements in favor of Palestinian statehood by French President Jacques Chirac and British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind make it virtually Palestinian membership.

With President Clinton freshly re-elected, knowing that he will never run for public office again and thus free from the first time to act in accordance with American principles and National interests, there is some reason to hope that the United States would not exercise its veto.

If Palestine were to become a member state of the United Nations, even the current Israeli government would (if only after a politically acceptable passage of time) have no choice but to recognize that the earth is not flat and seek to negotiate a mutually agreeable relationship between the two states.

Now that the Palestinian national movement has established a firm foothold of "effective control" on the soil of



Arafat

Palestine, it is on the terrain of international law and international legitimacy that Palestine should and must pursue its struggle for peace with some measure of justice.

Significant progress on this terrain could give Palestinians the confidence, pride and patience to resist a desperate, self-destructive return to violence while waiting out a frustratingly prolonged period of Israeli hesitancy and minimal progress on the ground.

Palestinian membership in the United Nations would make Middle East peace a question of when, not whether. It is an opportunity that can and must be seized.

John V. Whitbeck is an international lawyer who writes often in Europe and the Middle East Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Los Angeles Times

Middle East Beat
by Khairi Jabek

Facts on the ground

THE STATEMENT, fact on the ground, keeps cropping up each time the question of Jerusalem is discussed. The term is usually used in relation to Israeli activities in changing the remaining Arab character of the Holy City and finalize plans for making it the capital of Israel.

We have to be aware, nevertheless, that when the issue is discussed, to make sure we understand that the status quo for its Muslim and Christian Arabs, is not particularly easy. The taxation imposed by the occupation authorities limit the possibilities of improving conditions on the personal level. In other words, the young will never be able to marry and settle in Jerusalem. For them, internal or even external movements have become the only viable option to sustain their existence.

In addition, the Israeli laws of constraining the expansion of Arab buildings, and improvement of infrastructures have ensured that Arab Jerusalem will never be able to have the incentive of wanting to be in Jerusalem. The daily friction, economic difficulties, psychological pressures, and the fact that one is living under occupation have made life unbearable for the Arabs of Jerusalem.

So, when one talks about those facts on the ground, it is important to talk about people and their living conditions, not just buildings, streets, and shrines. The Jerusalemites are the essence of resistance to Israeli projects of changing the city and its character. It is pointless to glorify what we keep calling facts, for these are already difficult and miserable. What we ought to do is reinforce the identity of Jerusalemites, and help them, morally and materially, to continue to uphold the Arab character of their city.

It is important therefore, not to allow the status quo of Jerusalem and the Jerusalemites to be the starting point of our arguments. It would be our acceptance of the bare minimum of aspirations that are likely to diminish in due course, because of the obvious material and practical pressures exerted on the city and its dwellers.

We will find ourselves soon in a position that compromises the human elements in this struggle to concentrate on measurements and neighborhoods in the city. Undoubtedly, as Arabs and Muslims, we were complacent in the past, taking for granted that nothing will happen to the character of Jerusalem because of international pressures.

We have allowed our inter-Arab rivalry to giro the question of Jerusalem to the various capitals of the Arab world knowing only too well where guardianship remains. We have watched with bemusement the emergence of our relations with the Vatican, transformed into governmental relations, and the subsequent establishment of diplomatic relations between the Papal government and Israel. The Soviets, our uneasy moral allies, are not there any longer, so we remain stuck with our differences and the call for facts on the ground to be maintained.

Israel seems to have received a carte blanche from the USA, to pursue its policies with impunity. Despite the fact that permanent American-Palestinian committees will be established, and the declarations of the State Department that the US takes the question of the PNA and its leadership seriously, the habitual American veto at the UN still favors Israel. Undoubtedly, there is plenty of sympathy for the question of Jerusalem within the international community, but what is more important, is that we have to formulate our Arab strategy towards this particular question in unison, and base it on trust and confidence among ourselves to devise our practical solutions to the pressing daily needs of the Jerusalemites.

Foreign Exchange

| | Buy ID | Sell |
|-----------|--------|--------|
| US \$ | 0.7800 | 0.7800 |
| £ | 1.1432 | 1.1432 |
| DM | 0.4152 | 0.4152 |
| SFR | 0.4772 | 0.4772 |
| FRF | 0.1251 | 0.1251 |
| YEN (100) | 0.5678 | 0.5678 |
| DEL | 0.3699 | 0.3699 |
| LIT (100) | 0.0421 | 0.0421 |

SATURDAY

Under the new rules, the market will be open from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

General Price Pointer

Trade Volume

Stock Volume

Highest Traded Stocks

• Middle East Complex

Middle East Beat
by Khairi Janbek
Facts on the ground

THE STATEMENT that the American-based Hooper Jordan company received the approval of the National Resources Authority to excavate for oil in the Al Sarhan area, south east Jordan, Hooper Jordan will be carrying out a seismic survey and geophysical studies. It will re-evaluate the two already drilled oil wells and explore new nine wells. Commitments of the concern amount to \$23 million to be spent on exploration over the agreement's eight year validity time. The company will start operations next month.

Concluding its formal visit to Jordan last week, the Czech business delegation signed contracts with local businessmen to carry out joint ventures in Jordan at \$10 million. The delegation met with HRH Crown Prince Hassan, Minister of Agriculture, and heads of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery, the industrial cities, the free zones and the Housing Bank. The delegation included representatives from various sectors of the Czech economy specialized in industrial and energy projects, petrochemicals, construction, electric instruments, tourism services, wooden industries, A/C and refrigeration systems.

Trade relations between Jordan and Saudi Arabia are on the rise. The Saudi market is one of the most important to promote Jordanian products. The Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centers (JEDCO), which shoulders responsibility of promoting foreign activities, is organizing a vast exhibition of Jordanian products in Jeddah or Riyadh this year.

Also, a one-week joint Jordanian-Saudi expo is expected next May in Amman. It will include products of major industrial, tourism and services companies from the two countries.

However, a Saudi expo will be organized in Amman next week. It is sponsored by the Federation of Jordan Chambers of Commerce and the Saudi Council of Chambers of Industry and Trade.

Jordanian exports to Saudi Arabia in 1995 were JD 70.3 million, compared to JD 113.4 million last year.

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Business scene

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Foreign Exchange

| | Buy JD | Sell JD |
|------|--------|---------|
| US\$ | 0.7080 | 0.7100 |
| £ | 1.1432 | 1.1489 |
| DM | 0.4152 | 0.4173 |
| SP | 0.4772 | 0.4796 |
| FRF | 0.1231 | 0.1237 |
| YEN | 0.5678 | 0.5706 |
| DEM | 0.3699 | 0.3717 |
| ITL | 0.0421 | 0.0423 |

Jordan-Kuwaiti commercial ties expected to return to former level

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

IT WAS revealed last week that commercial ties between Jordan and Kuwait will resume shortly.

A high-level source at the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry quoted by Al-Sayasa, a Kuwaiti daily, said that the two countries agreed to continue their trade exchange soon. Kuwait, for the first time since the last Gulf War, finally gave permission for Jordanian trucks carrying fruits, vegetables and pharmaceuticals to enter its borders directly instead of passing through a third country.

Having gone through a chilled period, the two sides are doing their best to restore their ties to previous levels.

The step is being applauded by Jordanian economic officials who stress the importance of the Kuwaiti market to Jordan.

Dr Jawad Al-Anani, a prominent economic expert and former information minister told The Star that he was pleased at the opening of commercial borders because "Kuwait has been one of Jordan's important traditional trade partners."

The level of economic co-operation, which existed before the 1990 occupation of Kuwait, was one of the biggest between Jordan and any other country. More than 120,000 Jordanians were employed in Kuwaiti institutions, which in certain years generated up to \$450 million in remittance, Anani said.

The Kuwaiti market is distinguished with its high buying power making it of major importance to Jordan.

The Director-General of Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centers (JEDCO), Dr Mohammed Al-Halayqa expressed relief over the step to resume exports to Kuwait. He told The Star that in the last six years Jordanian lorries carrying fruits and vegetables went to Kuwait via the United Arab

Emirates, but they are now allowed directly. This makes it easier for Jordanian commodities to enter Kuwaiti market and something that lowers transport costs, he added.

The resumption of exports, particularly fruits and vegetables provides a marketing solution for difficulties facing Jordanian exports to other Gulf states. Dr Munir Hamarneh, an economist professor from the University of Jordan, pointed out that our agricultural produce is facing difficulties as far as marketing is concerned.

This requires a new permanent strategy to promote our products. The reopening of the Kuwaiti market to agricultural products from this country can provide such an outlet for Jordanian farmers.

Al-Halayqa points out that many Kuwaiti businessmen and importers visited Jordan lately and expressed willingness to import various commodities. JEDCO, for instance, is receiving daily inquiries from these businessmen.

The two sides are studying the possibility of organizing an exhibition for Jordanian products in Kuwait and opening a Jordanian trade center there, he added.

Commercial ties between Jordan and Kuwait were not restricted to exporting vegetables, fruits and drugs. Al-Anani pointed out that Jordan relied substantially on Kuwaiti aid and development loans, continuing to say that although it is presumptuous to assume that the resumption of trade exchange means full economic normalization, it is certainly a step on the right track.

While some observers stress that the economic and commercial relations between Jordan and Kuwait were relatively cool over the last six years, Al-Anani elaborates that although bilateral financial assistance stopped since 1990, "the Kuwaiti management of the Arab Fund for

Social and Economic Development has maintained a dignified and pan-Arab relations with Jordan."

The Kuwaiti decision to allow the direct entry of agricultural products was praised by the Minister of Supply, Munir Sobar who finds it a positive step that enhances efforts to increase bilateral relations between Jordan and Kuwait.

Moreover, according to Sobar, this step will enable farmers to promote their produce which has for a long time been widely accepted by Kuwait.

The volume of Jordanian

exports to Kuwait in 1990 was JD 11 million, but it sharply decreased afterwards. But it reached JD 1.4 million in 1994. However, the trade volume between the two countries shot up to JD 20 million by 1996.

But Al-Halayqa considers such a sum (JD 20 million) to be much below the needs of the Kuwaiti market, even though it points to a significant trend as far as Jordanian exports are concerned.

Not only officials and economic experts welcomed the direct resumption of trade exchange with Kuwait, ordinary people expressed satisfaction

over the development in relations between the two countries. This action rises people's expectations for sound ties and constructive relations.

Last week witnessed a noticeable rise in the size of vegetable and fruits exported from Jordan. According to the director of Central Vegetable Market, Mustafa Abu Osta'a, there were 209 refrigerators exported last week, among them 39 refrigerators went to Dubai, 10 to Qatar, four to Bahrain, 34 to Kuwait, 10 to Saudi Arabia and 104 to Lebanon besides nine to other countries.

Business Chronicle

Customs unification: a step to 'debureaucratize'

The unifications of customs that became effective on 3 March, paves the way for more reduction in customs charges and minimizes the burden on importers and manufacturers. The amended resolution to merge five main customs fees categories into one reduces their total from 11 to only six.

Customs fees were restructured on the tariff agenda while an additional sales tax was imposed on cars to maintain former duty. However, customs duties were cut on all commodities from 45-50 percent to 40 percent. This is a tax reduction of five to 10 percent on garments, shoes, cosmetics, detergents, carpets, utensils, electric instruments and other imported items. A cut of five percent also applies to cheese, coffee, tea and chemicals.

Early this week Director General of the Customs Dept., Nazmi Al-Abdulla said the tariffs reduction doesn't require an additional sales tax, except on cars. Its tax is restructured to 40 percent to cope with the unification.

This measure is seen by economic expert Dr Jawad Al-Anani as a step on the road to "debureaucratization." He said that in the past, imported goods were subjected to a long list of fees, earmarked taxes and additional charges, which meant sufferings and pain.

Such a decision will create a transparent climate, and saves time for customs clearance. It also reduces the production cost of domestic industrial output, as about 500 items such as apparatus, tools and capitalized commodities are now exempt. Also customs on telecommunication and computer systems are curtailed.

"By submerging customs charges in one original tariff, the importer goes only through a one-stop window," Al-Anani maintained.

Unification of fees provides more flexibility. Classifying commodities into basic needs, raw materials and complementary commodities, makes it easier to conduct any scientific study by the customs department in the future.

However, other customs and charges remained to protect local production. A 40 percent ratio continues to be imposed on imported commodities that are similar to those produced in Jordan.

The number of commodities involved in customs reduction is 216.



Jordan and the Palestine National Authority has signed three agreements relating to education, higher education and public works, Saturday. The agreements were signed during Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti's visit to Gaza last Saturday. The Prime Minister was at the head of a Jordanian delegation that included Minister of Education Dr Munthir Al-Masri and Minister of Public Works Abdel Hadi Al-Majalli.

USAir becomes US Airways

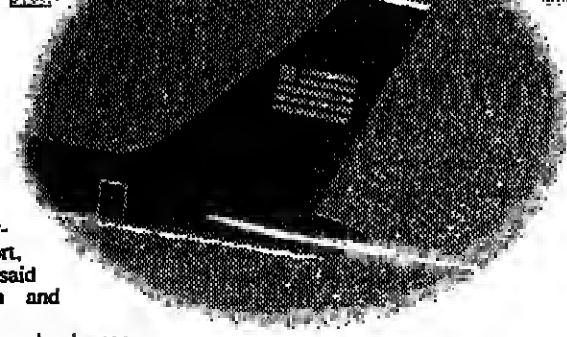
ARLINGTON—USAir is officially now US Airways. At 12:01 am 27 February, reservations agents, gate agents, flight crews and others began using the new name throughout the US Airways system. Three aircraft, two Boeing 727s and a Boeing 737, already have been painted in the deep blue and medium gray livery of US Airways and carry the airline's new symbol, a stylized version of the American flag.

Over the coming months, everything from aircraft interiors to airport facilities to ticket jackets and coffee cups will be changed to reflect the new livery.

"Our new look is crisp and professional and reflects our commitment to be an airline of substance, style and international reach—in short, the carrier of choice," said US Airways Chairman and CEO Stephen M. Wolf.

"These changes go much deeper than a new name and paint scheme. We have made much tangible progress over the past year in our operations, in developing an expanded route structure and in improving financial performance. In the latest Department of Transportation industry survey, US Airways ranked number one in on-time arrivals in the fourth quarter of 1996, up from number seven just one year ago. Our new identity reflects these strides as well as our aspirations."

It will take about three years to convert exterior of the entire fleet to the new livery, about two years to complete the interi-



ors and about six months to change airports and ticket offices. Other items, such as coffee cups and stationery, will be replaced as existing inventory is used over the next six months.

Included in the aircraft interior upgrades are new seats, seat covers, carpeting and sidewalls and overhead bins, bringing US Airways a fresh, uniform look throughout its fleet, inside and out.

Beyond the items bearing the new US Airways signature, other key elements of the new identity program include:

■ An enhanced frequent traveller pro-

gram, called Dividend Miles. In it, a new top tier, called Chairman's Preferred, rewards customers who fly more than 100,000 US Airways miles annually. They will receive free US Airways club memberships, upgrades and special reservations and airport services.

■ The introduction of Envoy Class on transatlantic flights this summer. This new business class service will feature sleeper-type seats with an industry leading 56 inches between seat rows and in-arm video units. Meals will be comparable to first class service. A special lounge for Envoy Class customers has been opened at the US's Philadelphia International Airport.

■ Expanded First Class cabins for the entire domestic fleet with nearly 30 percent more seats—24 seats for the Boeing 757 and 12 seats for aircraft smaller than the 757. GTE telephones are being installed on every aircraft in the fleet.

■ A new onboard magazine called Attache will debut in mid-summer.

■ A new US Airways web site is now on-line at <http://www.usairways.com>.

Jordan microfinance conference begins next week

UNDER THE patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince, Al-Hassan, a coalition of international aid agencies which includes the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank and the European Union (EU) will sponsor the Jordan Microfinance Conference on 17-19 March at the Royal Cultural Centre. The three-day event will bring together the world's foremost experts in microfinance with key players in Jordan to develop a framework of support for micro-lending practices.

Microfinance or the practice of providing small loans to

poor entrepreneurs, has been gaining momentum in Jordan among non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government agencies and financial institutions. Approximately JD 24 million is currently available through local microfinance networks to about 7,000 borrowers, benefiting 56,000 people in the country. In the next two years, microcredit funds are expected to reach JD 46 million.

The conference is organized against the backdrop of the Social Productivity Program which was launched by the government last January to fight poverty and unemployment. The program, which identifies microcredit as an

effective strategy for improving the country's productivity, aims to provide technical assistance to enhance the institutional capacities of microfinance organizations.

It will also make available microcredit funds to support income-generating activities and micro-enterprises for private sector development.

With microfinance playing an increasingly important role in the country's economic development, conference organizers are seeking to build a dialogue among microfinance practitioners and donors and to introduce "best practice" techniques. International experts will address plenary sessions and participate in working groups on pressing issues such as financial viability, outreach and support services, among others. By the closing session of the conference, a charter for microfinance practice in Jordan is expected to be drafted.

Microcredit has been enjoying increased popularity among NGOs around the world as a powerful tool for poverty alleviation and enterprise development. Last month, a Microcredit Summit in Washington DC drew some 2,000 microfinance practitioners, from different countries, including heads of states to reinforce the importance of microcredit in lifting low-income groups above the poverty line. An ambitious target was set at the summit to make microcredit available to 100 million poor people, especially women, by the year 2005.

Jordanian Industrial Cities Corp. promotes its services on the Internet

THE JORDANIAN Industrial Cities Corp. (JICP) will now have a site on the Internet. In an agreement with the Al-Mustakhal for Administrative Consultants (BOC), the corporation will now have a permanent site at www-arab-business-net/jicp.

The site will be operational by the end of this month. It is expected to provide comprehensive data on the corporation, its development and service available for the industrial sector in Jordan.

Factories and member companies that are linked on this site will have the opportunity to display their products and services to over 60 million users worldwide.

BOC, a pioneer in technological consultation and Internet specialist in the Arab World, will be responsible for all the whole technical set up.

MARKET WATCH

8-11 March

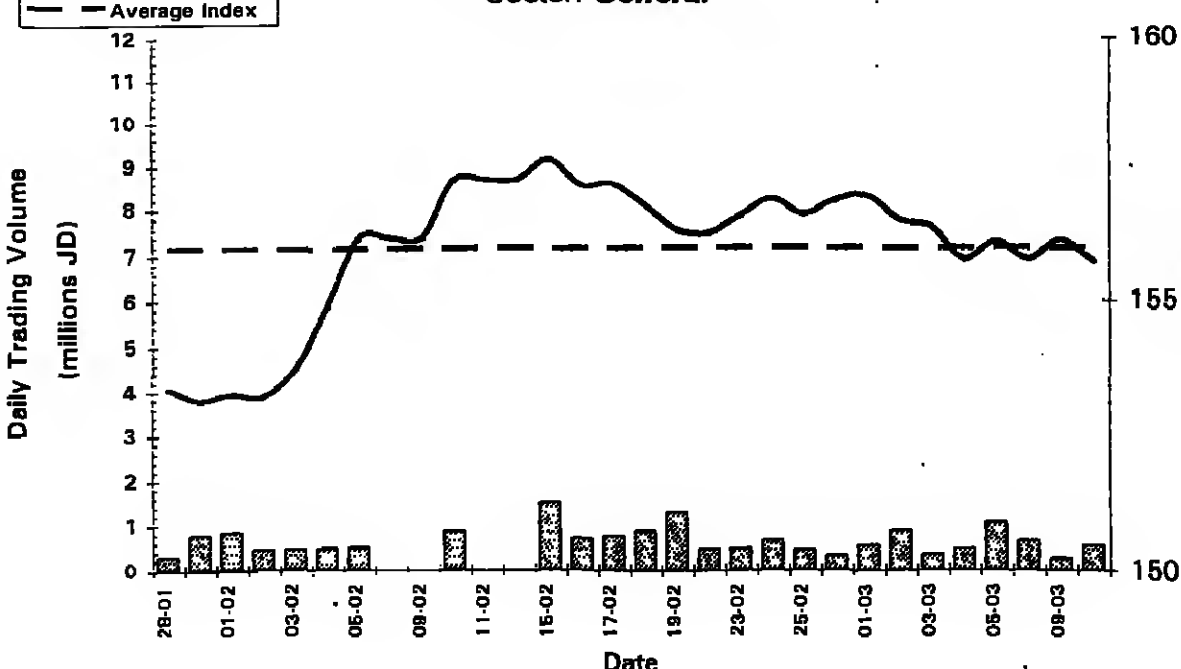
Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

| | SATURDAY | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY |
|------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| Real Estate Investment | 2.08 | 5.36 | 4.76 | 4.24 |
| Middle East Complex | 1.47 | 5.00 | 4.76 | 1.45 |
| Jordan Super Chemical | | 2.44 | 4.76 | 2.50 |
| Jordan Financial Investment | 5.00 | | | |
| United Engineering | 4.76 | | | |
| Arab In'l Food Indust. | 4.76 | | | |
| Linac & Purity | | 5.36 | | |
| United Engineering | | 5.00 | | |
| Arab Financial Investment | | 2.44 | | |
| Zarka Education & Investment | | 2.00 | | |
| Middle East Bank | | 1.90 | | |
| Intermediate Petro Industry | | 1.96 | | |
| Arab In'l Food Indust. | | | 4.44 | |
| United Education | | | 3.03 | |
| United Cigars | | | 2.50 | |
| Arab Investment | | | | 5.26 |
| Petro Industry | | | | 5.56 |
| Arab Financial Investment | | | | 4.65 |
| General Price Pointer | 155,760 | 156,110 | 155,730 | 155,420 |
| Trade Volume | 836154 | 371355 | 764628 | 640633 |
| Stock Volume | 644075 | 401894 | 828134 | 545616 |
| Highest Traded Stocks | | | | |
| Middle East Complex | 144100 | 64454 | 150053 | 144112 |

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949

Trading Volume
Index
Average Index

Daily Trading (last 30 days)
Sector: General



Madame Chiang Kai-shek

The Wildest Swan of fun and leisure

By Laura Tyson

SHE ENCHANTED America and Europe with her genteel Georgia accent, Christian piety and "oriental mystique". Her elegance and western ideals inspired fellow Chinese even as she repulsed them with her hauteur and extravagance. The presidents, prime ministers and dictators who were her contemporaries when she shone brightest, have long passed away from Churchill and Roosevelt to Mao and Mounthatten. She, the Wildest Swan, is the sole survivor.

Madame Chiang Kai-shek, one of the most influential women of the 20th century, is about to turn 100 or thereabouts. Much like the personality of the former first lady of China, the precise age of Soong May-ling is something of a mystery. Some sources suggest she is already a centenarian and others insist that she is 98. Even the day itself is a matter of debate.

Friends are gathering to celebrate quietly today in Taiwan, where she and her generalissimo husband retreated after losing mainland China to the Communists in 1949.

It is believed she was born in 1898 on 12 February according to China's lunar calendar, or mid-March by the solar calendar, in the west. The Chinese calculate age by chalking up a year at birth, so she is marking her 100th with a party on 31 March for her closest friends at her home in New York.

Her life spans China's long march from a feudalistic society ruled by a corrupt imperial regime towards a modern, industrialized state. She was also behind some extraordinary misconceptions about China, inspiring Christian missionaries to wildly over-zealous expectations about converting the masses, in part, because they knew the first lady was a Meth-

odist. And she influenced, directly and indirectly, international perceptions and policies on "Red China", the McCarthyite purges in the US, the Vietnam war and the communist quest to overrun east Asia.

Born into a wealthy Shanghai merchant family in the waning years of the Qing dynasty, she was the youngest of three Soong sisters whose lives helped to fashion the country's modern history. It is often said that the eldest loved money (she married a financier who became a finance minister), the second loved China (she eloped with Sun Yat-sen, the father of the modern republic) and the youngest, Soong May-ling, loved power.

Although in relatively good health, she rarely emerges from her Lutingtown, Long Island estate, to which she retired after the death of her husband in 1975. Her most recent public appearance was in March last year at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art for an exhibition of imperial Chinese treasures. Still feisty, she jokingly threatened that she would break the cameras of the swarming photographers.

In July 1995, she appeared at a reception held in her honor at the US Congress, more than half a century after she captivated the American public with stirring pleas for aid to fight the Japanese. The first private citizen to address the House and the Senate, she was described in serious newspaper reports as the "willowy, exotic Madame Chiang", a "lissome stamping" ovation.

"Hiller is not our first concern," she warned, urging the

US to concentrate its military energy and money on defeating Japan, which was a "sword of Damocles" hanging over the civilized world. The warnings were blended with her brand of wooing: "I came to your country as a little girl...I speak your language, not only the language of your hearts but also your tongue...I feel that I am also coming home" Congress was full of converts to her cause.

lian mother and her sister, Ching-ling, whose sympathies were with the Communists. But the marriage welded Chiang's military and political might with the Soongs' financial clout and international connections.

It was apparently not love at first sight. Chiang, with the sunken features of a haunted visage, was already married and kept a pair of concubines. But, for the sake of the international image, it was important that their relationship be seen as more Christian than Confucian.

That explained his pre-nuptial conversion and the choice of Shanghai's Majestic Hotel for the wedding, where a Methodist minister presided and an American tenor sang "O Promise Me". May-ling, loyally served her husband as a critical bridge between east and west, as a translator, propagandist, and inveterate letter-writer and

winner of world leaders. She convinced President Roosevelt to put China high on the agenda at the Cairo conference in 1943, much to the frustration of Churchill, more concerned by events in Europe. Still, she made a favorable impression on Sir Winston in the shadow of the pyramids. He found her "most remarkable and charming".

Generalissimo Chiang knew little English, but hers has always been a remarkably ornate, elegant, sometimes convoluted and archaic language, memorable if not entirely convincing. In 1966 she denounced

the "convulsions and perverted paroxysms" of the Cultural Revolution and in 1989, after the Tiananmen Square massacre, she spoke of the "dastardly communist politeness unleashed by the unconscionable Deng Xiaoping".

You needed a dictionary nearby when she spoke of "yannigans", of "the ravenous maw of Moloch" and "a prolepsis of malicious misreading". When Britain recognised Beijing, she condemned it for having "bartered the soul of a nation for a few pieces of silver".

There was no official title, other than "first lady", but she hinted at her power when her husband was taken captive by rebel soldiers in 1936 and she managed to convince the captors in the western city of Xi'an to release him. "Jehovah will now do a new thing, that is, he will make a woman protect a man". Her ability to win friends and influence enemies helped her to convince Washington to recognise the island of Taiwan as "China" for almost three decades, and to shun the Communists in Beijing.

Central to her power was Henry Luce, co-founder of Time and Life magazines, and the son of China missionaries. He was generalissimo on the Time cover six times during the war. Luce was blind in the blatant corruption of the Nationalist regime and inspired by the vision of a Christian, communist-free China. When the Nationalists were defeated in the civil war, he fretted about how the US had "lost China". And, until his death in 1967, he was determined that Madame Chiang figure in an annual list of the world's 10 most famous women.

The British were generally less infatuated with the Chiangs and the generalissimo was lampooned as "General Cash My-choque". But her ability to



The US veto! This has become the usual scene. New United States ambassador to the United Nations, Bill Richardson votes against a European resolution that calls on Israel to rescind its decision to build a Jewish neighborhood on Jabal Abu Ghneim. The Europeans harshly criticize the Israeli settlement policy in Arab East Jerusalem which they recognize as occupied.

get things done was admired. She was behind the formation of the Flying Tigers of General Claire Chennault, whose aircraft ferried supplies over the Himalayan "hump" to southwest China, where they fought the Japanese. The Texan general thought she had good intentions, but "knew nothing about the subject" later he called her "one of the most perfect women in the world".

The Chiangs were much like Mikhail Gorbachev, feted as saviours internationally, but unpopular at home. Her public relations machine is still purring, but unflattering, tell-all accounts of her life have left the image tarnished. The reactions of harsh critics, who portray her as a dragon lady and keeper of dark secrets, are as extreme as the affections of her eternal fans.

On Taiwan, where she lived for 26 years as part of the Chinese government-in-exile, she was long feared as the power behind the throne. Remembered for an iron will, western tastes and a disdain for native-born Taiwanese, she was also reviled as a symbol of wealth, power and corruption.

In the book *Beauty and Sor-*

row, by the Taiwanese journalist Wang Fung, former servants are quoted as saying that she kept two large refrigerators brimming with chocolate and imported fruit. "She is seen as elitist and totally out of touch with the common people," said Wang Kewen, a Chinese historian.

Her acolytes have but glowing praise. They say she is polite, gentle, unassuming, compassionate, relaxed and likes to have fun. According to Hau Pei-tsun, a former premier, she has supported Taiwan's transformation from military dictatorship over the last decade.

She still has an impact. A controversy arose last year over whether the bodies of the generalissimo and his son (her stepson) and successor, Chiang Ching-kuo, should be buried on mainland China. They lie embalmed in a "temporary" tomb, awaiting the promised Nationalist Chinese reconquest of the mainland. She resolved the conflict by agreeing to bury her husband's body in Taiwan but only until an appropriate opportunity arose to transfer him to the ancestral home.

Financial Times

Arab, Israeli intellectuals form alliance for peace

By John Daniszewski

CAIRO—It represents, one Israeli organizer says, "the first dent in the wall".

Despite the unsettled state of Israeli-Arab relations, 40 intellectuals from Egypt, Jordan,

the Palestinian territories and Israel quietly met in Copenhagen in late January and issued a manifesto announcing an "alliance" of respected thinkers to support the search for a just peace and reconciliation in the region.

What's more, they plan to set up a permanent organization operating separately from governments to further their aims.

The creation of this International Alliance for Arab-Israeli Peace was as unexpected as it was bold, and while it has received little attention in the wider world, it has set off a fiery debate in intellectual circles in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East.

The nine Egyptian participants in the dialogue have been pilloried by fellow intellectuals for their perceived betrayal—an unacceptable breaking of ranks with the boycott on normalization with Israel—and for the secrecy in which they met their Israeli counterparts.

A counterdeclaration has been signed by hundreds of intellectuals, and Lutfi Khali, one of the prime movers behind the so-called Copenhagen Declaration, last week was hounded out of the leftist National Progressive Unionist Party that he co-founded.

But beneath the surface, there are signs that the discussion has prompted a degree of reassessment about the usefulness of the blanket rejection of anything Israeli.

Khali, a writer who once opposed the Camp David accords that ended the state of war between Israel and Egypt, said recently that letters he is getting from doctors, engineers and artists run 5-1 in favor of the declaration. "Even I was surprised," he said.

The Islamic, Pan-Arabist nationalist and leftist groups and unions opposing it are mired in dogma left over from the Arab-Israeli wars of the past, he said. They ignore "the new realities in the region and all over the world" and "are not offering any alternatives".

Egyptian signatory Abdel Monem Said, director of Cairo's Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, said the declaration's basic aim is to unite Israeli and Arab public opinion to rescue the peace process, which has seemed in peril in the past year.

The four-page document condemns the use of violence by either side and urges implementation "in letter and spirit" of all



Israeli brutality against Palestinians continues despite talk of peace and coexistence

the agreements that have been signed by Israel and the Palestinians. It calls for halting new settlements, paying "special attention" to finding a mutually satisfactory status for Jerusalem and reaching a final-status agreement that grants Palestinians "self-determination, including statehood". It also urges a comprehensive peace between Israel and Lebanon and Syria, based on UN resolutions and the formula of Israeli trading occupied land for peace.

Rather than representing an Arab surrender, the statement, as Said sees it, demands of Israel a fair deal for the Palestinians. One of its successes, he said, is that it has attracted not only peace activists on the Israeli left but also intellectuals from the center of the Israeli political spectrum and even a few people in the ruling right-wing coalition led by the Likud Party—people like Maxim Levy, a member of Israel's parliament and brother of Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy.

When the peace process was going more smoothly, before the 1995 assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Arab intellectuals had been slowly coming around to the idea of coexistence and even cooperation. Then, a step such as the Copenhagen Declaration would not have seemed nearly so controversial.

But in the current hothouse atmosphere, the document has

set off "a civil war among thinkers," said Egyptian journalist Salah Eddin Hafez.

"This alliance," sadly, represents a mere illusion: it will dissolve into nothing. It only serves to spread (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu's lies, allowing him to delude the world about his commitment to honoring peace accords," wrote Salama Ahmad Salama, a prominent columnist for Al Ahram newspaper.

Some critics have argued that the proper role of Arab intellectuals is to be firmer with Israel than governments or diplomats, who for purely pragmatic reasons may be forced into compromises.

"If we... confuse the role of the intellectual with that of the diplomat, the Arabs will lose the enlightened support of intellectuals who help in defending Arab rights," warned Ahmed Youssef, a political scientist at Cairo University.

It is amusing, Said said, that Egyptian thinkers are suffering such angst about the document when Palestinians, the ones most directly affected, have shown few of the same reservations.

The Egyptian intellectual, he lamented, wants to be "more royal than the king".

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

The UN drugs report Hot on their trails

International trends in drug abuse and trafficking in 1996 are among the topics of the annual Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), released lately. What follows are brief excerpts.

Among the problems highlighted are emerging illicit markets for anorectic ("weight-reducing") stimulants, and an increase in their abuse from both licit and illicit sources and a global surge in the prescription of other stimulant drugs in the treatment of behavioural problems in children. In addition to cultivation of cannabis in several regions and the spread of cocaine abuse to West Africa and Eastern Europe, the Vienna-based Board this year points to a rapid spreading of abuse of amphetamines, mainly of "Ecstasy".

In its review, the Board, notes successes in using international treaty provisions to make it difficult for clandestine laboratories to obtain the chemicals they need to manufacture cocaine, heroin and stimulants such as amphetamine, methamphetamine and "Ecstasy". At least 300 metric tons of acetic anhydride—enough to make a billion street doses of heroin—and almost 1,800 tons of chemicals that would have been used to process more than 100 tons of cocaine, were prevented, says the Report.

The Report notes how global economic integration, opening borders and deregulation of trade facilitated international drug trafficking. Several million tablets containing diazepam and chlorthalidopride manufactured in Asia were seized from people trying to smuggle them into Nigeria, more and more reports reach the Board on the channelling of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals through free trade zones. Khat, a stimulant plant originating from eastern Africa, has been seized repeatedly in Europe. North America and the South Pacific, large quantities of ephedrine were smuggled out of Asia and Europe, through Guatemala, and into Mexico and the United States.

The Board sees drug-related corruption, bribery and intimidation as threatening police, judicial officers, politicians, tax authorities and customs officers, through the "immense economic power" of drug traffickers. It suggests that countries set priorities in drug law enforcement and focus primarily on high-level drug criminals.

Among the general concerns given special attention is a revived marketing of "weight-reducing tablets" that offer a quick fix for obesity and a whole range of psychological syndromes and disorders.

Abuse of appetite suppressants for their stimulant, methylphenidate, which had jumped from three tons in 1990 to 10 tons in 1995, continued to rise in 1996. In the US, which leads the world in demand for this amphetamine-type prescription drug in the treatment of attention deficit disorder (ADD) in children, is expected

to see a rise in consumption to 10.5 tons in 1996 and nearly 13 tons in 1997. Methylphenidate-related emergency room cases among 10 to 14-year-olds increased 10 times since 1990.

In connection with measures by other countries, the Board now sees results. Thanks to control mechanisms leading to a number of arrests and seizures involving large shipments of precursor substances, drug traffickers are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain chemicals they require to manufacture heroin, cocaine, amphetamine, methamphetamine and "Ecstasy".

Among other trends identified by the INCB include:

In Africa, increasing amounts of cocaine are being smuggled out of South America—mainly Brazil—through eastern, southern and western Africa into Europe. An estimated 60 percent of all cocaine shipped to South Africa passes through; the rest is consumed locally. Crack abuse is already creating problems in South Africa and in several western African countries.

Angola, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Mozambique and Namibia have not yet ascribed to any of the three international drug control treaties. The Board comments that few African countries have made progress in updating their drug control laws.

In North America, "the biggest illicit drug market in the world" is in the United States, with abuse of cocaine, cannabis and hallucinogens increasing among youth in recent years.

Illicit manufacture of amphetamine derivatives and indoor cannabis cultivation have become major problems in Canada.

Cannabis is cultivated in all three North American countries. Mexico in 1995 eradicated 21,000 of an estimated 32,000 hectares of the illicit crop; the United States destroyed 373 million cannabis plants. In Canada, about 50 per cent of the cannabis supply is from domestic, mainly hydroponic, cultivation.

South America is still the only region supplying cocaine to other parts of the world, above all the United States and Europe.

In East and South Asia, the surrender of Myanmar insurgent leader Khun Sa considered the key person in the illicit trade in opiates—has created a new situation in the Golden Triangle (Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand), particularly in Myanmar's Shan State, where most of the region's opium is produced.

Opium smoking is diminishing in the subregion, but is being replaced by the far more dangerous practice of injecting heroin, and the trend has been accompanied with increased needle sharing and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.

Hong Kong, one of the world's largest financial centres, tightened its anti-money-laundering laws in 1995 and beginning in January 1996 placed all substances listed in the tables of the 1988 Conventions under strict control.

Twenty-four methamphetamine smuggling groups were dismantled in Korea in 1995. In Western Asia the major sources of supply of traffickers are illicit cultivation of cannabis and opium poppy in Afghanistan, Pakistan, central Asia and the Caucasus and illicit production of hashish in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the clandestine manufacture of heroin in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey. ■

WHAT'S ON GUIDE JORDAN TOBAC

TOURISM CULTURE ENTERTAINMENT

AMMAN

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Around TOWN

Jordan Season in Paris kicks off

THE JORDANIAN Season in Paris was inaugurated by Her Majesty Queen Noor and Mrs Bernadette Chirac last Tuesday. It is designed to increase bilateral relations between France and Jordan on all levels and promote tourism between the two countries. Up to 14 Jordanian sculptures and plastic artists are taking part in the event that is already seen as a great success.

The season, which lasts till November, is aimed to make people more aware of the archaeological treasures of Jordan. There are for instance, 42 artifacts from the Bronze Age borrowed from museums in Amman, Irbid and Jerash. Also nine mosaics from the 6th and 7th centuries BC, as well as rare pages from the Quran.

In addition to that, there are books by 19 century travellers travel guides and factbooks. A permanent exhibition of traditional costumes from Jordan and Palestine is also on display in Paris.



Ziad Dalloul

An artist of multiple interferences

By Anca de Maio
Special The Star

Syrrian painter born in Suweida in 1953 and resident in Paris since 1984 Ziad Dalloul, opened last week his first solo exhibition in Amman at the Darat Al Funun. It lasts till 3 April.

At the suggestion of Mrs Suha Shoman, the present collection brings together pieces from two sectors and periods of Dalloul's creation: a series of 13 engravings on metal (1986-89) and 33 paintings in pigment and acrylic (1996-97). This special formula highlights Dalloul's original approach of the two art genres that consists of an adventurous delirium of frontiers. At first glance, the 10 years that chronologically keep them apart are minimized while the presence of the engravings among the paintings is not suspected yet.

Dalloul's engravings are special because they let themselves be taken for something else. Their access to the technical space of painting is an opportunity of trap-setting. Such traditional features of engraving as black and white austerity, small scratching gestures on each square centimeter, plate corrosion and relatively small formats, are all daringly infringed in Dalloul's "Circumstances de lieu" (Space Modifiers). "Practically, I paint my engravings," he explains, "I paint with wide gestures on big metal plates using colors instead of acids."

"In my case, the fabrication of the plate is the very moment of creation, while the surface I deal with simultaneously converts itself into the space I search for," he says. As suggested in the title by the clear reference to a grammatical category, Dalloul's engravings treat the subject of space in changing terms. "The space is more important than the object it envelops," he points out.

The printing of the engraving is a moment of surprise: it reveals the other way round reading of the created space. Terms like "frame" and "background" are no longer functional in a space that is neither external nor tridimensional. The space with Dalloul is always a question of metamorphosis. The transformation is definitely introverted. It starts from a spatial reality (either it be Paris or another place), passes through the stage where the space turns into matter (i.e. the moment of creation itself) to finally the ultimate phase of the cycle, when the space evaporates into abstraction.

Committed to paintings for "a quarter of a century," Dalloul has approached all the three major subjects in the history of painting—portrait, landscape and still nature—but only the last two have made the domain of his interest. "I have always been looking for an opening between landscape and still nature," Resembling an engraving, the most particular exhibit of the collection is a six-meter long painting, that is divided into five frames lined up horizontally. Bearing the title of one of Manet's paintings, Dalloul's "Lunch on the grass" is the plastic crystallization of his inner temptation "to transform still nature into nature."

"I am convinced that one element, like a tree, for instance, can represent a landscape in itself," Dalloul asserts. The two paintings entitled "The first trees" are the best evidence in this respect: The foamy black shape that may resemble a tree turns into a big dark stain on an enveloping shaded gray, whose details of textures confer relief and materiality to the whole.

As the French art critic Jean-Claude Le Gouic points out, Dalloul's "clair-obscur" is "metaphysical" and not "demonstrative." It represents the means the painter resorts to reach "the prototype of an idea on the subject" (Dalloul) or simply the abstract. His black and gray landscape-trees evoke the absolute time



of the Genesis in a mysterious language. The couple of paintings entitled "September" depict more earthly and emotional landscapes. Genuine autumnal states of mind, the trees are this time coloured in brown, yellow and ochre natural pigments mingled with acrylic.

"Still life on paper" is an other example of how the figuration (suggested in the probable shape of a water-lily or of a tridimensional vase) gets dispersed into an abstract gesture against the textured background of a Deluge-like seascape. "The fabrication of the water consisted in superposing layers and layers of colours diluted with very much water that I let

evaporate after each coating," the painter describes.

His option for "ecological" traditional techniques conciliates the subjects of his paintings and their materialization on good papers in ink, sepia and natural pigments. Dalloul emancipates still nature from its domestic condition and amplifies it into a free unlimited landscape. "Nature is enigmatic and powerful when man cannot master its magnitude," Dalloul thinks. In "Breeze," the study of light as matter makes possible "the refuge from the tangible into the wide wild nature," he adds. Twenty of his paintings are centered on the

motifs of two humble objects of everyday life: the table and the chair. "These ephemeral objects that constantly follow us in the kitchen, in the dining-room, at work and everywhere, can equally be thrones for kings, and altars for offerings," underlines the artist.

Therefore I decided to paint these ordinary physical things so as to show how sacred, eternal and abstract they can be, he stressed. Under the magic eye and the skillful hand of the artist, the kitchen stool turns into transcendent nature whereas the table becomes metaphysical landscape.

Round and square forms, foregrounds and backgrounds, interlace and fuse into self-sufficient compositions. The colors evoke those of his native region and they are "monochromatically" employed as "matter" and not as simple adjectives. "I do not search to be either local or international," Dalloul confesses, "but, naturally, the traces of my native and present culture are detectable in my color palette, landscapes and maybe atmosphere."

Dalloul's work is an indivisible whole, a huge landscape itself where the music of each picture-object, either it be a painting or an engraving, gets amplified in a symphony of material sensations, vivid emotions and abstract spaces.

Dalloul has displayed 11 solo exhibitions in Syria, France, Lebanon and Belgium. He participated in around 20 collective exhibitions all over the world. He has published two books that explore the poetry-graphics synchronism. One of them is part of the present exhibition at Darat Al Funun: "La main de la pierre dessine le lieu," Tablette de Petra. Poetry by Adonis and Graphics by Dalloul. Ziad Dalloul prepares a third similar book, on Amman, to complete the set: Paris-Petra-Amman.

Youth Theater opens but there are lots more to see

By Star Staff Writer

CULTURE EXPRESSES real identity. And theater is the very instrument of such an expression. It is with this in mind that the Jordan 5th Youth Theater Festival made its debut at the Royal Cultural Center. Under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, the festival will continue till 20 March.

With plays performed every night at the RCC, the festival is already being seen by critics as a major success. Organized by Jordan's Artists Association (JAA) with the cooperation of the Ministry of Culture, the festival is being hailed as a great opportunity for young talent. Indeed, these were the comments made by producer and television presenter Orwa Zreikat, who is also the secretary of the JAA.

He added that the JAA has proven itself as a permanent event, about creativity carried out by the youths of this country. They plays are being produced and directed by such up and coming directors as Muhammad Al Safadi and Muhammad Al Qassem.

Its opening night, last Sunday attracted



HRH Prince Merid ibn Raad deputizing for Queen Noor opens the festival

many, including the Minister of Culture himself, Adel Al Qudab and many leading producers, directors, actors and theater critics.

Since then the house continued to be packed with people coming in to watch top plays written and directed by distinguished artists. Plays like Media by and Ras Al Mamlouk Jaber and Thawrat Al Zing (the revolution of the negro) were real crowd pullers. The opening night of the Media was tremendous, and a number of people had to be turned away because the stage being so full.

All in all, there are 10 plays that are being shown through out the event. What is interesting about these theater productions is that they draw on local, Arab and international writers. Indeed, this is what makes the festival so lively. Hisham Gharibeh for instance is a top local novelist and playwright while Saad Allah Wanoos, the writer of Ras Al Mamlouk Jaber, is an Egyptian, who draws on that experience from that part of the world. Similarly, the play Media draws on the Greek mythology.

All this experience and diversity gives a certain richness to the festival and in particular to local theater movement in this country. In this respect also, the words of producer Muhammad Al Birmawit, who is



Zreikat

also the head of the Higher Organizing Committee for the Festival, are foretelling. He said that the continuation of theater as an art depends on its ability to reflect reality and the state of social being. This is what the plays hope to do. By the end of the festival prizes will be given to the best play.

Last week the foyer of the RCC was packed with people who just wanted to come and see what is new in the theater world. Top rate Jordanian actors and actresses are frequenting the festival. These included Jamil and Juliet Awad, Abir Issa, Nabil Al Mashimi, Doud Jalel and lots other.

What is interesting about this year's festival, is that the plays that are being shown will be judged at the end of event and the best plays will be given prizes. This is considered as an innovative way of making sure that only the very best will be presented in this and future festivals.

French Skal group arrives in Amman

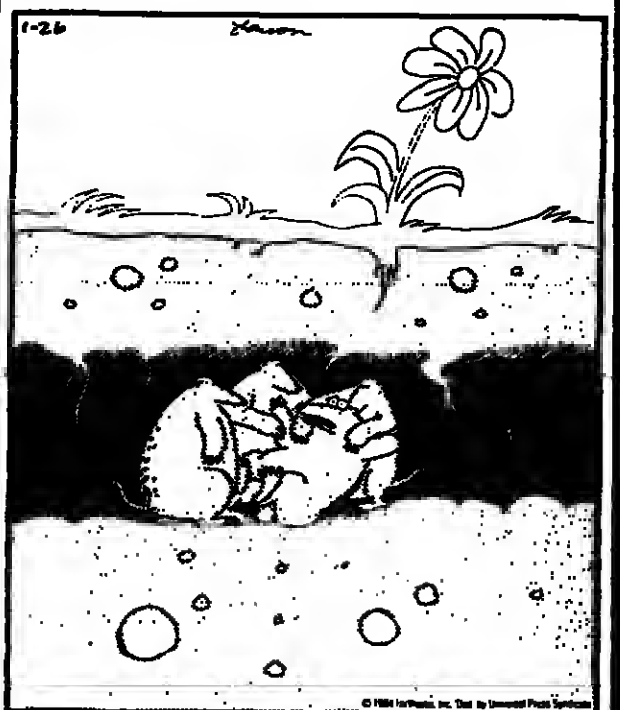


TOURISM TO Jordan is likely to increase even further this year. A group of 120 people of the Skal Club in France arrived in Amman, Wednesday, for what is called as a touristic experience. The organizer for the tour is Dakak Tours. Its general manager, Mr Ziad Dakak says that nine other groups are coming through his agency this year.

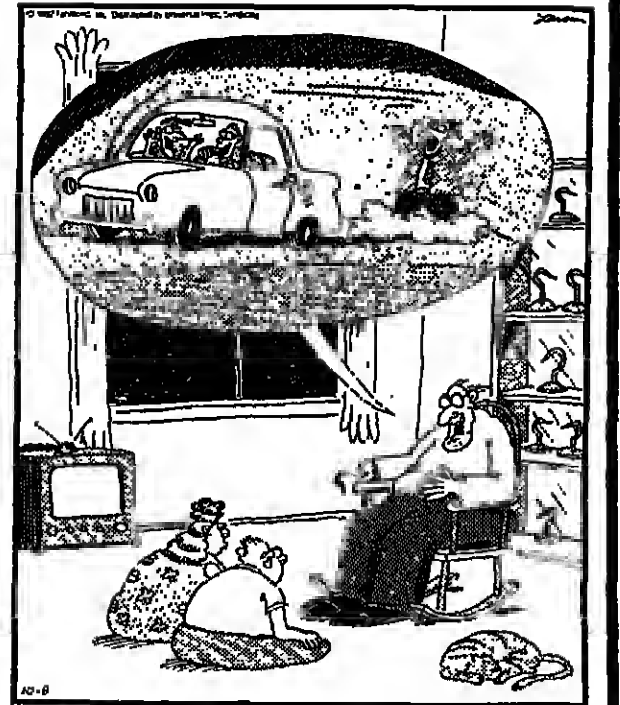
Tourism is part of the Jordan Season that this week starts in Paris. One of the main aim of the Tourism is to increase French tourism to Jordan. There are 500 Skal Clubs in the world today. Their aim is to increase international tourism. The Amman Skal Club was formed in 1966. Dakak says one of the main aim of his agency is to increase international tourism to Jordan.

THE FAR SIDE

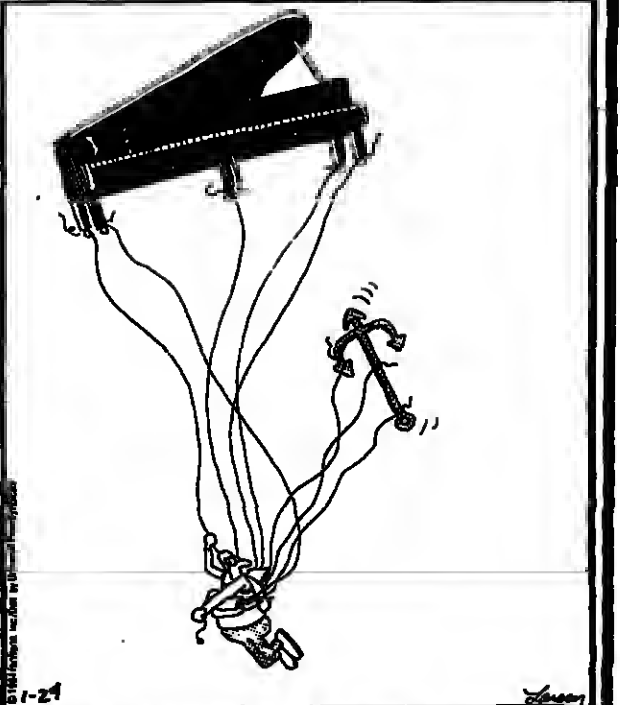
By GARY LARSON



"It's OK! It's OK! The tunnel was closing in on me there for a while, but I'm all right now."



Years later, Harold Zimmerman, the original "Hookhand" of campfire ghost stories, tells his grandchildren the Tale of the Two Evil Teen-agers.



Murray didn't feel the first pangs of real panic until he pulled the emergency cord.



"Well, Mr. Cody, according to our questionnaire, you would probably excel in sales, advertising, slaughtering a few thousand buffalo, or market research."

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

La prose du roi Hussein irrite M. Netanyahu

Le Premier ministre israélien s'est déclaré mardi mécontent «du ton et du contenu» d'une missive envoyée dimanche par le roi Hussein dans laquelle il est accusé de «détruire le processus de paix». «Je n'accepte ni le ton, ni le contenu de la missive», a déclaré Benjamin Netanyahu. «J'attends de nos partenaires dans la région qu'ils n'adoptent pas automatiquement la position des Palestiniens, chaque fois que nous avons des divergences avec eux». Dans sa missive, le roi Hussein dénonçait la politique officielle du gouvernement israélien. «Vous détruisez la paix, je n'ai aucune confiance en vous». Se référant à la décision israélienne de construire un nouveau quartier juif à Jérusalem-Est, il mettait en garde M. Netanyahu: «Si vous ne revenez pas sur votre décision de construire Har Homa, les conséquences seront désastreuses pour le processus de paix». Le roi Hussein reprochait enfin au Premier ministre d'avoir refusé récemment d'autoriser le président de l'Autorité palestinienne Yasser Arafat, de retour dimanche d'Amman à Gaza, de survoler le territoire israélien à bord de l'avion personnel du souverain hashémite. «J'avais envie de piloter moi-même l'avion, comme je l'ai fait au-dessus de Tel-Aviv du temps de Rabin. J'aurais bien voulu voir si vous alliez donner ordre à vos canons de tirer sur l'avion de la paix».

Le Jourdain, la section en français du Star, consacrera un supplément spécial le 20 mars à la saison jordanienne qui débutera prochainement à Paris. Des exemplaires de ce supplément seront distribués en France. Un moyen exceptionnel de faire de la publicité hors des frontières pour votre entreprise. Pour tous renseignements, contactez Olivier Bras ou Mahmoud Fares au 645 380 ou au 652 380.

SELON

Il est très étonnant de constater que l'on aime en Jordanie parler des régimes politiques du monde entier et que l'on aborde l'histoire de tous les pays à l'exclusion d'une période: celle de la révolution française qui a vu la fin d'une monarchie au profit d'un régime plus démocratique.

Pourquoi un tel sujet est soigneusement évité, ou superficiellement abordé dans le royaume hashémite? C'est probablement par peur d'irriter le pouvoir. Mais en quoi cette page de l'histoire française peut-elle avoir un lien avec la Jordanie? Le roi Hussein ne ressemble-t-il pas à Louis XIV et le régime monarchique qui régnait en France voilà deux siècles ne présente pas de similitudes avec le système politique jordanien actuel.

Tout au long de l'histoire du monde, les monarchies ont certes souvent régné avec despotisme. Mais ce n'est pas toujours le cas, comme par exemple au Danemark où le roi a initié de nombreuses réformes démocratiques. Une situation que l'on retrouve en Jordanie.

Par exemple, c'est par un décret royal que le parlement jordanien a vu le jour, et c'est par un autre que les femmes ont obtenu le droit de vote. La semaine dernière, les Jordaniens ont pu voir leur roi dénoncer à la télévision les lourdeurs de l'administration.

Il ont pu l'entendre répéter sa volonté de promouvoir les libertés publiques dans le pays. Des paroles qui ne sont certes pas nouvelles, mais qui, malheureusement, ne sont pas toujours suivies d'effets.

A de nombreuses reprises, le roi a clairement dénoncé certains problèmes en demandant une solution rapide. Lorsque l'artiste jordanienne Mona Saoudi lui a rendu visite pour aborder la question des mères jordanaises mariées à un étranger qui ne peuvent pas transmettre leur nationalité à leurs enfants, il a demandé aux autorités compétentes d'étudier ce problème. Mais qu'en est-il aujourd'hui? De même, les suggestions faites à maintes reprises par le prince Hassan pour lutter contre les crimes d'honneur en punissant sévèrement leurs auteurs n'ont débouché sur aucune mesure concrète.

Trois peu de régimes dans le monde réclament l'indépendance du système judiciaire, la séparation des pouvoirs législatifs et exécutifs et une plus grande liberté de la presse. Des propositions faites cette semaine par le roi Hussein.

Afin que les choses changent réellement, il est nécessaire d'offrir à ces réformes proposées de vraies garanties de réussite. Pour cela, il faut songer aujourd'hui à réformer la constitution pour qu'il y ait ces nouvelles propositions.

Ce sujet est particulièrement sensible en Jordanie, mais une chose est certaine: toutes ces réformes ne pourront avoir de poids que grâce à la force et au pouvoir de la constitution.

Sa'eda Kilani

Le Jourdain, on y revient. Tous les jeudis dans le Star 645 380

Réfugiés

Les Palestiniens exclus des débats

Le forum du Haut Commissariat aux Réfugiés qui s'est ouvert hier à Amman a pour but de favoriser la cohésion régionale pour l'aide aux réfugiés. Le cas des Palestiniens n'y sera malheureusement pas abordé.

Le forum régional du Haut Commissariat aux Réfugiés des Nations-Unies, qui a commencé hier ses travaux à Amman, comporte un paradoxe qui étonne au grand jour. Ce forum discute des problèmes des réfugiés dans la région sud-ouest de l'Asie et de l'Afrique du Nord. Il propose d'élaborer «une stratégie régionale» susceptible de résoudre les problèmes des réfugiés et de les limiter à l'avenir. Mais, à aucun moment, le forum ne discutera des problèmes des réfugiés palestiniens! Pourtant, ceux-ci se trouvent par centaines de milliers à quelques kilomètres du lieu de la rencontre du HCR. On trouve des camps de réfugiés à Jebel Hussein, Wehdat, à Baqa', à Irbid, à Karamé... Un simple visite des délégués dans un ou deux camps ne serait-elle pas plus instructive que de nombreux débats sur la question?

La réponse est à la fois simple et catégorique. C'est non parce que l'UNRWA (office de secours et de travaux des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés) est l'institution chargée de s'occuper des 3,3 millions de réfugiés palestiniens présents en Jordanie, au Liban, en Syrie, et dans les territoires palestiniens. Un chiffre auquel il faut rajouter les Palestiniens se trouvant hors de cette zone géographique, soit environ 15 millions de personnes supplémentaires.

Or, cette répartition des tâches entre les deux institutions, l'UNRWA et le HCR, semble désavantager une cer-

taine catégorie de réfugiés. Le HCR, organisme officiel de l'ONU, applique le système international de protection des réfugiés (environ 26 millions dans le monde entier). L'application de ce système signifie, selon la convention relative au statut des réfugiés de 1951 et son protocole de 1967, que le HCR est responsable de la protection et de l'assistance des réfugiés. L'objectif du HCR est d'assurer le rapatriement librement consenti des réfugiés et de leur fournir l'aide nécessaire pendant et après le statut de réfugié.

Le HCR a assuré la réintégration de milliers de réfugiés dans leurs pays d'origine, comme par exemple au Pakistan oriental, en Afrique, en ex-Yougoslavie et, plus récemment, au sud de l'Irak ou au Rwanda.

Quant à l'UNRWA, elle offre une aide partielle aux réfugiés palestiniens, à savoir essentiellement matérielle. Chaque année, son budget s'élève à environ 50 milliards de dollars de dépenses. Le HCR ne connaît pas de telles difficultés, son financement étant assuré par l'ECOSO (conseil économique et social de l'ONU).

Les réfugiés palestiniens, dont ceux de Jordanie, sont en droit de se demander pourquoi l'ONU les a exclus de son système de protection internationale propre aux réfugiés. De nombreuses résolutions onusiennes, notamment la résolution 194, affirment pourtant le droit des réfugiés palestiniens de retourner chez eux.

Pourquoi donc cette exclusion des Palestiniens des règlements internationaux? C'est une question que l'Association jordanienne des droits de l'Homme a tenu à poser dans un mémorandum à Sadako Ogata, haut commissaire aux réfugiés président du forum d'Amman.

Les racines de ce problème sont bien sûr d'ordre politique. Les discussions sur le retour des réfugiés palestiniens de-



Le camp de Jabalia, un des huit camps de Gaza.

viennent bientôt débiter entre Israël et l'Autorité nationale palestinienne. Bien que ce processus n'ait qu'un objectif, la paix, une chose est sûre: pour la majorité des peuples de la région, cette paix doit passer par le retour des réfugiés chez eux. Car s'il en est autrement, les germes de la guerre resteront dans la région, malgré les accords de paix signés.

Suleiman Sweiss

La gagnante de l'enquête-concours lancée par le Jourdain est Amal Kal'aji. Elle gagne pour une valeur de cinquante Dinars de livres offerts par la Librairie Philadelphia.

Palestine

«L'odeur de l'intifada»

Le projet de nouvelle colonisation entrepris par les Israéliens près de Jérusalem génère une vive tension dans les territoires palestiniens.

«Je sens l'odeur de l'intifada»

a déclaré cette semaine Faycal Hussein, responsable du dossier de Jérusalem au sein de l'OLP, à propos de la récente décision du gouvernement israélien de construire une nouvelle colonie israélienne, baptisée Har Homa, à la limite de Jérusalem et Bethléem, sur les terres confisquées de la colline d'Abou Ghneim. Le haut responsable palestinien est même allé jusqu'à qualifier cette décision de déclaration de guerre contre les Palestiniens. En effet, ce projet expansionniste devrait permettre, à terme, l'installation de 50 à 60.000 colons sur 30.000 unités de logement. C'est la plus grande opération de colonisation israélienne depuis l'occupation de juin 1967. Elle s'inscrit au moment où les relations israélo-palestiniennes connaissent une crise.

L'architecte des accords d'Oslo du côté palestinien, Abou Mazen, a présenté lundi sa démission du poste de directeur des négociations en raison de l'enlèvement israélien. Le gouvernement israélien a en effet décidé unilatéralement de se retirer uniquement de 9% des territoires de Cisjordanie, contrairement à l'accord d'Hébron.

signé le 15 janvier qui prévoit un retrait de 30% des zones rurales.

Les Palestiniens comptent sur une importante pression internationale pour infléchir la politique israélienne. Mais le veto américain émis cette semaine au projet européen d'une résolution du Conseil de sécurité condamnant la colonisation israélienne a déçu leurs attentes, et a souligné l'existence d'une crise de confiance entre les Palestiniens et l'administration américaine.

Eviter un nouveau «septembre noir»

L'accélération de la colonisation israélienne intervient au moment où les négociations sur le statut définitif, dont Jérusalem, doivent réellement s'engager. Khalil Taffi, expert de la question de la colonisation, dont le bureau a été fermé avec ceux de trois autres institutions palestiniennes, souligne

que la colonisation israélienne à Jérusalem vise essentiellement à «changer la vision palestinienne de la ville de Jérusalem». Est le capitale du futur Etat palestinien en essayant d'imposer une majorité démographique israélienne. Le géographe palestinien indique qu'Israël contrôle pour l'instant 34% de la surface de Jérusalem. Il ajoute que le projet d'Abou Ghneim vise à séparer la ville de Jérusalem de Bethléem. Une politique qui s'inscrit dans la stratégie israélienne consistant à morceler les territoires palestiniens en bananoustans isolés. Pour répondre à cette nouvelle agression, les Palestiniens privilégient la voie diplomatique sur le plan arabe, international, et également israélien. Mais aucun responsable palestinien ne semble prêt à garantir qu'un nouveau «septembre sanglant» n'aura pas lieu.

De Gaza, Hassan Balawi

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle «Les enfants au cinéma». Le 17 mars à 20h30 au CCCL, Je suis le seigneur du château de Régis Wargnier (1988).

Exposition

Muhammed Ali Shakhir, jusqu'au 31 mars au CCCL.

Concert

Les jazzmen de Quartette Monsieur B se produiront le 18 mars à 20h00 au collège De La Salle.

Droit international humanitaire

La Jordanie en phase d'adaptation

L'introduction de la notion de crime de guerre dans le droit pénal et la meilleure protection de l'emblème de la croix rouge et du croissant rouge sont deux des mesures préconisées à l'issue d'une table ronde organisée par le CICR sous les auspices du ministère de la Justice.

Les pharmaciens, les médecins ou les cliniques qui utilisent l'emblème du croissant rouge ou de la croix rouge pour signifier l'aspect médical de leurs activités ne sont généralement pas conscients du fait qu'ils commettent un délit et qu'ils risquent une amende, voire même une peine d'emprisonnement.

La loi jordanienne protège en effet l'usage indicatif de cet emblème qui est réservé à la société jordanienne du croissant rouge.

«A ce jour, personne n'a encore été poursuivi pour abus d'emblème en Jordanie», précise le Dr Mohamed Al-Hadi, président du croissant rouge jordanien. «L'année dernière, nous avons mené une campagne de sensibilisation auprès du public pour inciter au respect de l'emblème. Nous nous sommes répétés toutes les personnes et les entreprises abusant de l'emblème, et nous leur avons envoyé une lettre. Nous allons leur laisser un peu de temps, mais s'ils ne répondent pas, nous allons porter plainte contre eux».

Protéger l'usage indicatif de l'emblème n'est cependant pas suffisant. Pour être conforme au droit international humanitaire (le DIH, consigné dans les conventions de Genève et les protocoles additionnels qui protègent les victimes des conflits armés), le droit interne des pays signataires doit aussi, et surtout, veiller à ce que la croix rouge et le croissant rouge soient utilisés à des fins de protection. Une mesure qui n'est pas prévue dans la législation jordanienne.

En effet, en temps de guerre, c'est l'emblème de la croix rouge ou du croissant rouge qui protège les hôpitaux, les ambulances et le personnel sanitaire et qui lui permet d'administrer des soins aux blessés et aux malades. Cet emblème ne peut être utilisé que sous le contrôle d'autorités compétentes (ministère de la Défense ou de la Santé) et par la société nationale Croix rouge-croissant rouge. Mais pour que l'emblème soit respecté en temps de guerre, il faut déjà qu'il le soit en temps de paix et

que le public soit conscient de son importance et de sa signification. Une tâche qui incombe aux Etats signataires.

La Jordanie a ratifié les conventions de Genève en 1951 et les protocoles additionnels en 1979. Comme tous les traités internationaux, le DIH nécessite l'adoption de mesures législatives et administratives sur le plan national pour être appliqué.

La table de la table ronde organisée par le Comité international de la Croix rouge (CICR) sous les auspices du ministère de la Justice, à Amman, avait précisément pour but de sensibiliser la mise en œuvre, sur le plan national, du DIH.

Depuis de nombreuses années, le CICR encourage les Etats à prendre des mesures concrètes relatives à la mise en œuvre du DIH. En Jordanie, ces mesures ont été prises en matière de droit pénal, de droit administratif, de droit de la guerre, qui sont tenus à Genève, à l'exception que le CICR renforce son rôle de consultation et d'assistance aux Etats. Une recommandation émise par la 26ème conférence du mouvement de la Croix rouge et du croissant rouge.

C'est pourquoi le CICR a servi de consultant en droit humanitaire qui comprend des juristes et un centre de documentation à Genève ainsi que cinq juristes basés à Amman, Abidjan, Bogota, Moscou et New Delhi.

Crimes de guerre

La table ronde qui s'est tenue à Amman, la première dans la région, était organisée par le conseiller juridique pour les services consultatifs en droit international humanitaire pour le monde arabe, Amour Zemmal, basé à Amman. Des tables rondes similaires seront organisées au cours de cette année au Yémen, en Egypte ou au Liban.

La qualité des participants, une quarantaine, a assuré le succès de cette rencontre. «Le niveau des débats était très élevé», confie Amour Zemmal. «La présence et la concentration des participants étaient sans faille et le réalisme o-

prégué les recommandations adoptées par le consensus à la suite de débats intenses».

Si l'insuffisance de protection de l'emblème dans la législation jordanienne était l'un des sujets débattus, une autre lacune a aussi été abordée: l'absence de la notion de crime de guerre dans le droit pénal national.

Le DIH prévoit une série de crimes de guerre. Par exemple, l'homicide volontaire sur une personne protégée (prisonnier, civil ou blessé), les atteintes graves aux droits des personnes ou des biens protégés, la torture, le traitement inhumain ou dégradant, compris les expériences biologiques, de même que l'usage perfide de l'emblème, sont selon le DIH, des infractions graves. C'est-à-dire des crimes de guerre.

En Jordanie, le droit pénal ne prévoit pas de crime de guerre. De plus, selon la législation nationale, les crimes bénéficient de la prescription: après 15 ans maximum leurs auteurs ne seront plus poursuivis. Or, selon le DIH, les crimes de guerre sont au contraire imprescriptibles.

A l'issue de la table ronde, les participants ont adopté cinq recommandations qui ont été envoyées aux autorités concernées.

Les participants ont en particulier demandé une meilleure protection de l'emblème, l'introduction de la notion de crime de guerre dans la législation nationale, l'amélioration de l'enseignement et de la diffusion du DIH, et enfin la formation d'une commission nationale consultative pour l'application du DIH.

Jacques de Maio, chef de la délégation CICR à Amman, a exprimé sa satisfaction à l'issue de cette réunion. «Le fait que les services consultatifs pour le monde arabe soient basés à Amman et que cette première table ronde ait eu lieu ici reflète les relations privilégiées que le CICR entretient avec la Jordanie. La qualité des débats, au cours de ces trois jours, servira de modèle pour les tables rondes qui seront organisées à l'avenir dans les autres pays de la région».

Claudine Assad

DAKKAK TOURS

ACCUEIL DU GROUPE SKAL CLUB

Depuis 1995 l'agence Dakkak est représentée en France. C'est dire combien messieurs Dakkak s'intéressent à la meilleure des relations entre la France et la Jordanie.

Le 11 mars 1997 débutait l'année de la Jordanie à Paris, sous le haut patronage de sa majesté la reine Nour et de madame Chirac, par une soirée de gala organisée par le ministère jordanien du Tourisme, Royal Jordanian, et Forte Grand. Une soirée à laquelle, encore une fois, l'agence Dakkak participait. La soirée sera suivie de diverses expositions tout ou long de l'année, dont le thème est la Jordanie, à l'Hôtel de Ville de Paris, dans les grands magasins du Printemps et à l'Institut du Monde Arabe.

En même temps, le 12 mars, Dakkak Tours et Travel avaient le plaisir et l'honneur d'accueillir le Skak club de France. Outre le fait que le Skak ait choisi la Jordanie comme destination cette année pour découvrir notre pays et apprécier ce voyage dans notre histoire, le Skak club de France, association regroupant des professionnels du tourisme français, souhaite par cette visite avoir un contact plus personnalisé avec les professionnels du Skak club jordanien.

En septembre dernier, l'ex-président monsieur Henri Faure et le président monsieur Robert Vignes avaient eu l'honneur de rencontrer le Dr Soleh Irshaidat, ministre du Tourisme et des Antiquités, qui leur avait longuement expliqué l'effort que la Jordanie accomplit pour favoriser sur notre terre un tourisme de qualité.

De nombreuses rencontres sont prévues avec des membres de la famille royale puisque le Skak club est aussi un club dont les membres valorisent les relations de cœur et souhaitent aussi un échange franco-jordanien pour aider les enfants handicapés des deux pays.

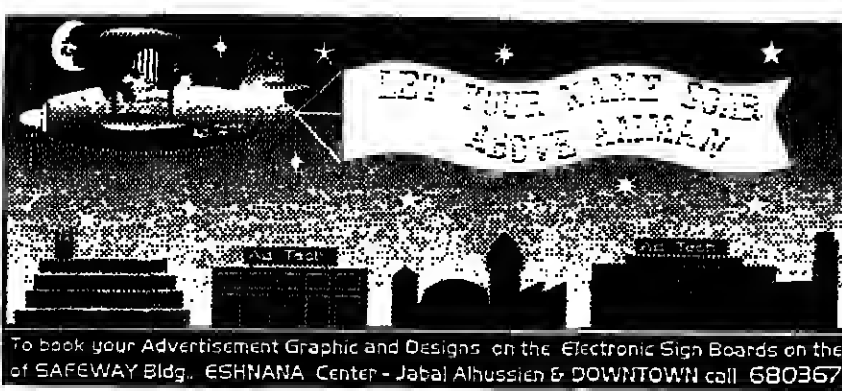
Saluons également la présence de quelques membres du Skak club de Belgique. Tout au long de l'année, Dakkak Tours & Travel attend de nombreux groupes français dont la qualité de sa clientèle saura apprécier la beauté de la Jordanie, la qualité de son accueil et de ses échanges culturels franco-jordanien.

Activities

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|---------------------|--------|
| Royal Cultural Centre | 661026/7 | Concord Cinema | 677420 |
| American Centre Library | 820101 | Piazza Cinema | 699238 |
| British Council | 636147/8 | Philadelphia Cinema | 634144 |
| French Cultural Centre | 637009 | | |
| Goethe Institute | 641993 | | |
| Cervantes Institute (Spanish) | 610858 | | |
| Turkish Cultural Centre | 639777 | | |
| Haya Arts Centre | 665195 | | |
| Y.W.C.A. | 641793 | | |
| Y.W.M.A. | 664251 | | |
| Dar al Funun | 643252 | | |
| Alia Art Gallery | 639303 | | |
| Baladun Art Gallery | 657132 | | |
| Nabil Al Mashini Theatre | 675571 | | |
| Nabil & Hisham's Theatre | 625155 | | |

Sports Clubs

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Orthodox Club | 667181/5 |
| Royal Automobile Club | 815410 |
| Royal Shooting Club | 736572 |
| Royal Chess Club | 673713 |
| Royal Racing Club | 09-801233 |
| Jordan Bridge Club | 676990 |
| Amman Mun. Library | 636111 |
| Univ. of Jordan Library | 843555 |
| R.S.C.N. | 837931/837937 |



Government Depts.

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|------------------------------|--------|
| The Prime Ministry | 641211 | Labour | 698186 |
| Amman Greater Municipality | 636111 | Municipalities & Environment | 641393 |
| Agriculture | 686131 | Parliamentary Affairs | 641211 |
| Awqaf & Islamic Affairs | 666141 | Planning | 644466 |
| Culture / Jabal Amman | 636391 | Post & Communications | 624301 |
| Education & Higher Education | 669181 | Public Health | 665131 |
| Energy & Mineral Resources | 815615 | Public Works & Housing | 668481 |
| Finance | 636321 | Social Development | 673191 |
| Foreign Affairs | 643621 | Supplies | 602121 |
| Industry & Trade | 663191 | Tourism & Antiquities | 642311 |
| Information | 641467 | Transport | 641461 |
| Interior Ministry | 663111 | Water & Irrigation | 680100 |
| Justice | 663101 | Youth / University | 604701 |

Diplomatic Corps

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Algerian | 641271/2 |
| Australian | 673246/7 |
| Austrian | 644635 |
| Bahraini | 664138/9 |
| Brazilian | 642183 |
| Belgian | 675683 |
| Bulgarian | 818151 |
| Canadian | 666124 |
| Chilean | 823360 |
| Cyprus Honorary Cons | 677559 |
| Czech | 671813/666135 |
| Danish Consulate Gen. | 603703 |
| Finnish Consulate | 824654/824676 |
| French | 641273/4 |
| German | 689351 |
| Greek | 671331/2 |
| Hungarian | 815614 |
| Icelandic Consulate | 698851 |
| Indian | 637262 |
| Indonesian | 828911 |
| Iraqi | 639331 |
| Italian | 638185 |
| Japanese | 672486/7 |
| Kuwaiti | 675135/8 |
| Libyan | 693101/3 |
| Lebanese | 641381 |
| Moroccan | 641451 |
| Netherlands | 637967/625165 |
| New Zealand Consulate | 636720 |
| North Korean | 666349 |
| Norwegian Embassy | 644932/4 |
| Omani | 686155 |
| Pakistan | 622787 |
| Palestine | 677517 |
| People's Rep. of China | 666139 |
| Philippines | 645161 |
| Polish | 637153 |
| Qatari | 682666 |
| Romanian | 667738 |
| Russian | 641158 |
| Saudi Arabian | 814154/6 |
| Slovenia Honorary Cons. | 861542 |
| Sri Lanka | 683905/704960 |
| South Korean | 660745/6 |
| South Africa | 811194 |
| Spanish | 614166/9 |
| Sudanese | 644251/2 |
| Swedish | 669177/9 |
| Swiss | 686416/7 |
| Syrian | 641076 |
| Taiwan | 671530 |
| Tunisian | 674307/8 |
| Turkish | 641251 |
| U.A.E. | 643347/643341 |
| United Kingdom | 823100 |
| United States | 820101 |
| Yemen | 642381 |
| EEC Delegation | 668191 |
| ESCWA | 694351/8 |
| ICRC | 688645 |
| UNDP/WFP | 668171/7 |
| UNRWA | 607398 |
| UNICEF | 629571 |
| UNESCO | 606559 |

Airlines

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Adria Airways | 667029 |
| Aeroflot | 641510 |
| Aeromexico | 694802 |
| Air Canada | 630879 |
| Air France | 666055/667824 |
| Air India | 688301/2 |
| Air Lanka | 682140 |
| Alitalia | 625203 |
| Alyemda (Air yemen) | 653691 |
| America - West Airlines | 694802 |
| American Airlines | 669068 |
| Arab Wings | 894484 |
| Austrian Airlines | 693845/694604 |
| Balkan Airlines | 665909 |
| British Midland | 694802 |
| British Airways | 828801 |
| Cathay Pacific | 628596 |
| China Airlines | 636232 |
| Cyprus Airways | 667028 |
| Delta Air Lines | 643661 |
| Egypt Air | 630011 |
| Emirates Airlines | 643341 |
| Gulf Air | 653613 |
| Hungarian Airlines | 622275 |
| Iberia | 637827/644036 |
| Iran Air | 622826 |
| Japan Airlines | 630879 |
| KLM | 622175 |
| Korean Airlines | 676624/662236 |
| Libyan Arab Airlines | 643831/2 |
| Lufthansa | 601744 |
| Malaysian Airline | 639575/653446 |
| MEA | 636104 |
| Olympic | 630125/638433 |
| Philippine Airlines | 640200 |
| PIA | 625981 |
| Polish Airlines | 625981 |
| Qantas | 862288 |
| Royal Jordanian | 678321 |
| Saudia | 639333 |
| Scandinavian Airlines | 604499 |
| Singapore Airlines | 676177 |
| Sudan Airlines | 694501 |
| Swiss Air (G.S.A.) | 659791/641906 |
| Syrian Air | 622147 |
| United Airlines | 641959 |
| USAir | 694801/2 |
| TAROM - Romanian | 637380 |
| Thal Airways | 637195 |
| Trans World Airline | 623430 |
| Turkish Airlines | 659102 |
| Yemenia Airways | 628175 |
| Queen Alia Airport | (08) 53200 |
| RJ Flight Info. | (08) 53200 |

Important Numbers

Emergencies

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Police | 192621111 |
| Civil Defence H.Q. | 193198/199 |
| Fire Brigade | 622090/93 |
| Ambulance | 199 |
| Blood Bank | 775121 |
| Traffic Police | 6254336/39703 |
| Traffic Accidents | 897467/8 |
| Highway Police | 787111 |

Hospitals

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Akleh Maternity | 642441/2 |
| Al-Ahli, Abdali | 664184/6 |
| Al-Bashir, Ashrafieh | 775111/2b |
| Al-Muasher Hospital | 667227/9 |
| Amal Hospital | 674155 |
| Army, Marka | 891611/15 |
| Hussein Medical Centre | 813813 |
| Italian-Al-Muhajreen | 777101/2 |
| Jabal Amman Maternity | 642362 |
| Khalidi Maternity | 641261/6 |
| Malhas, J. Amman | 636141 |
| Palestine, Shmeisani | 664171/4 |
| Queen Alia Hospital | 602340/50 |
| Shmeisani Hospital | 607431 |
| The Islamic, Abdali | 666127/37 |
| University Hospital | 845845 |

General

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Amman Municipality | 843402 |
| Electricity Complaints | 121 |
| Prices complaints | 666181 |
| Hotel complaints | 0853300 |
| Sewerage Complaints | 896390 |
| Water Complaints | 656390/91 |
| Jordan Television | 773111/9 |
| Radio Jordan | 774111/9 |
| Post Office Info. | 750981/2/3 |
| Telephone Information | 121 |



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THE STAR'S

COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT Companies

Welcome to the Star's workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. E-mail us at StarNETS@com.jo with your news and views.

Mailing lists servers on the Internet:

An alternative low cost media channel

By Jawad Abbassi
Special to The Star

SOVIET PROPAGANDA, during the cold war, decry the West's democracy as the "dictatorship of capital and media."

The Soviet propagandists, neglecting their own dismal record on democracy, kept on pointing out that major media corporations in the West were influenced or owned by big companies and, therefore, didn't wholeheartedly commit themselves to giving the whole story.

The Soviet claim, far-fetched and self-serving as it was, nevertheless did have some truth to it.

Mass media these days, broadcast or print, does require massive amounts of capital and could therefore be influenced in a manner that gives prominent coverage to "mainstream" opinion while denying fringe opinions and other sides their fair share.

What is ironic, however, is that the very establishment that the Soviets decry as media meddling (the US government and military), eventually laid down the very infrastructure that would provide a cheap tool for efficient mass media efforts for all opinions: the Internet's different services.

LISTSERV servers on the Internet, whose primary function is to operate mailing lists used to distribute the email to them to a list of recipients, installed the basic infrastructure.

They provide the means for a group of users to establish an email forum on any topic or area of common interest which is instant, reliable and free from the high costs of conventional printing and mailing.

With the proliferation of Internet technology around the world, many groups of different opinions realized the potential of LISERV servers to allow them to bypass the usual fiscal or political hurdles that had hitherto denied them access to mainstream media.

Whether used by political groups of the right or left, a group of scientists in quantum physics or a bunch of soccer fans, mail list servers easily and cheaply fill a niche provided for the alternative media forum that has been in demand. The technological advances made maintaining a mail list server a breeze, at least for the technically informed. Users can list all the subjects of the mailing lists by merely typing the word "list" in the subject area of a message sent to the LISERV server email address. Furthermore, recipients can subscribe to whatever "list" they find interesting by a simple step: sending a mail message with the word "subscribe" in it. Un-subscribing to a list is similarly done through the word "unsubscribe". Mailing list servers have suites of easy commands that users and recipients can use, an example of such commands is sending an email message to "List-serv@uga.cc.uga.edu" with the word "help" in the subject area.

An interesting mail list that has gained reputation in Jordan is called Mid-East realities which offers opinions and articles regarding the Middle East and US policy, that would not usually be deemed fit for publishing by mainstream media in the US or the Middle East.

NETS offers some of the postings of this mailing list to its subscribers in its news section. Subscribing to this mailing list is easily done by sending an email message to LISTSERV@MIDDLEEAS.ORG with only the words "SUBSCRIBE MER-L" in the subject area.

Similar interesting mail lists include one for quotes of the Hadith—the prophet's sayings and holy tradition—which send

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The first independent survey on global software piracy: Over \$13 billion lost worldwide to software piracy

THIS SURVEY was commissioned by the Business Software Alliance (BSA) and Software Publishers Association (SPA) and was conducted by International Planning and Research (IRP). The survey evaluated sales data from 82 countries in six major world regions. Data analyzed for 1994 and 1995 provided the following conclusions:

Worldwide piracy losses are estimated at \$13.1 billion for 1995, a nine percent increase over the \$12.2 billion estimate for 1994. This figure exceeds the combined revenues of the 10 largest personal computer software companies. "Software piracy continues to plague the software industry around the globe, hindering growth and innovation."

The industry as a whole and more importantly its customers, bear the burden of these losses," commented Robert Hollyman, president of BSA.

Piracy losses were estimated at \$521 million in the Middle East and Africa. Oman had the highest piracy rate with 96 percent, followed by the UAE with 96 percent and Qatar with 91 percent. "Through the IRP study, we have a better understanding of where our work must be focused."

"Over the coming months we will be redoubling our efforts with governments and the private sector around the world to ensure the proper protection of intellectual property rights for software publishers," said Ken Wasch, SPA president.

The Business Software Alliance promotes the continued growth of the software industry through its international public policy, education and enforcement programs in 65 countries. BSA worldwide members include the leading publishers of software for personal computers:

Adobe, Apple Computer, Autodesk, Bentley Systems, Lotus Development, Microsoft, Novell, Symantec Corporation and the Santa Cruz Operation.

News update

Smart Systems introduce TrendWare

Smart Systems, a Jordanian computer hardware and software distributor, has been appointed as Middle Eastern distributor for TrendWare products.

TrendWare provides a variety of networking equipment and software, ensuring faster ethernet communications through ethernet hubs and accessories. Also, TrendWare provides Internet communications equipment.

For more information on products from TrendWare, contact Smart Systems at telephone 704329.

Borland announced Arabic Delphi

Borland, one of the largest software publishers worldwide, announced the release of an Arabic edition of its programming tool, Delphi.

Arabic Delphi 2.0 is claimed to be the "only completely object oriented development tool that combines the rapid application development benefits of a component-based visual programming environment, the performance of an optimizing 32-bit native-code compiler, and scalable database programming tools."

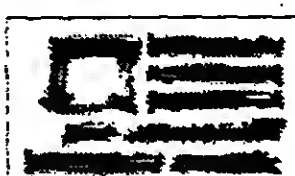
Arabic programmers, who have long struggled with Latin-based object oriented programming will probably find Arabic Delphi to be a viable option for future development. For more information, contact Aptec in Dubai on telephone ++971 4 525536.

10 million NCs to be sold in the year 2000

According to a study by DataMonitor, some 10 million units of network computers (NCs) will be sold in the year 2000. These will mostly be purchased by government agencies and business, with steady growth in consumer demand also expected. The figure mentioned above does not only include NCs used to hook up to the Internet, but also cover normal units used as part of corporate networking inside organizations. Also, DataMonitor claim that network computers will account for around 2.5 percent of the total computer market by the year 2000.

American Computer Show '97 is on

This weekend, it's worth taking some time to visit the American Computer Show '97, held at the Philadelphia Hotel in Amman. It presents an opportunity to check out the latest hardware, software and accessories available on the Jordanian market. What's more, with around 30 companies participating in the exhibition, you are bound to find whatever items you are looking for.



Don't miss it. ■

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Motoring

The affordable and the best

By Stuart Marshall

THE MOST RADICAL car Mercedes-Benz has created had its world debut at the Geneva salon de l'automobile, which opened this week. The egg-shaped A-Class is super-mini-sized but family-car spacious. It is said to have a city car's manoeuvrability, the comfort of a conventional Mercedes and the versatility of a multi-purpose vehicle. All it has in common with a "proper" Mercedes is the three-pointed star on the front.

Mercedes-Benz claims the A-Class is as safe as a conventional, full-sized saloon car because, in a crash, the engine slides underneath the floor and not into the passenger space. Shifting the seats around allows it to be anything from a driver-only load lugger to a five-seat family car. In four-seat family car mode, passengers have lots of room and there is ample luggage space.

It has front-wheel drive and a choice of three engines: 1.4-litre and 1.6-litre petrol and 1.7-litre diesel. Electronically controlled direct-injection, turbocharging and intercooling make the four-valve-per-cylinder 1.7-litre one of the world's most advanced diesels and the A-Class potentially



among the most economical of cars. The diesel version will average up to 63mpg (4.48 l/100km) and the petrol-engine ones achieve at least 41mpg (6.9 l/100km).

When the A-Class goes on sale in Germany in the autumn, customers will be able to collect their own cars from the factory at Rastatt.

Geneva salon, always one of the best international motor shows, is more star-studded than ever this year. But it is the affordable exhibits (such as the Mercedes A-Class)

rather than over-egged confections for the rich that are the main centres of attention. Among them are Ford's sporty Fiesta-based Puma coupe; the restyled Peugeot 306s, including a long-awaited estate car; the Suzuki Wagon R-Plus, a six-seat mini-people mover; and the tiny, 3.5 metre long Seat Arisa mini-hatchback, rivaling Fiat's Cinquecento for compactness.

Audi's elegantly curvy A6 saloon replacement is making its first appearance at the salon. From the side, the parabolic sweep of the roof has a family resemblance to the new VW Passat, even the Skoda Octavia.

Initially, the new A6 will be powered by three spark-ignition engines, all with five valves per cylinder. The top model will have a 2.8-litre, 193-horsepower V6 and front-wheel or quattro all-wheel drive. Others will have a new 2.4-litre V6 1165-horsepower or 1.8-litre, 150-horsepower, turbocharged four-cylinder. A 1.9-litre direct-injection turbo-diesel follows soon afterwards.

The handsome new VW Passat Estate was unveiled at the salon and is also due to go on sale in Britain in May. Roomier and better equipped than the car it replaces, it must be even more successful. All models have roof rails and load cover, ABS brakes, twin airbags and pre-tensioned seat belts front and rear.

A walk around the salon demonstrates that the lifestyle, four-wheel drive car is alive and well and not just in Switzerland, where their snow-heating extra traction is in great demand every winter. Daihatsu unveiled a 4 x 4 not previously seen outside Japan.

The Real Time transmission of the 2.0-litre, 128-horsepower Honda CR-V five-seat sports-utility drives the front wheels on hard surfaces, feeding power automati-

cally to the rear wheels when the front ones lose grip. The lid of its waterproof under-floor cargo store lifts out to double as a picnic table. The top half of its tailgate opens separately. BMW 5-Series Touring style, for loading small packages.

Chrysler Jeep's Cherokee has had a major facelift. Like the original Range Rover, which looked as good 25 years on as it did when new in 1970, the veiled Cherokee is an on-off road classic. Smart enough for town it goes well in the rough.

Land Rover had been expected to unveil its new and smaller rugged mate for the Discovery and Range Rover at Geneva but its launch is still some months off. It will probably be in the autumn, either at Frankfurt or London.

No motor show is complete without concept cars. Some are just attention seekers that will never be heard of again. Others are either destined for early production or at least point the direction in which a manufacturer intends to go. Prominent among these are two Rover prototypes which are straws in the wind for a Mini replacement and a small outside, roomy within people-mover. The Shiro, a styling study for a large executive car, indicates a move up-market by Daewoo is likely once its new small and medium cars have become established.

On the Opel (Vauxhall) stand, the Signum concept is a vision for a future generation of large, lifestyle estate cars. An experimental space-saving rear suspension, plus electrically operated sliding rear seats, provides a flat load floor up to 3 metres (9ft 10in) long.

Powering this down-to-earth concept car is a 3-litre, V6, 24-valve direct injection turbo diesel engine, jointly developed with Isuzu. Computer simulations suggest this 175-horsepower unit would give Signum a top speed of 144mph/232kph and an average fuel consumption of 45mpg (16.6 l/100km). ■

Financial Times Syndications

Rugby game is tackling Jordan

By Olivier Bras
Star Staff Writer

ON THE pitch of the Orthodox club, few spectators are surprised at a strange spectacle. About 20 people are running after an oval ball, tumbling at times into a human pile. This new group is controlled by two men shouting what seems like silly orders: "scrum", "line-outs", or "five press-ups". This was the scene last month when Jordan's first rugby team went into action.

Rugby matches are now played once a week in the country, and enthusiasm for the sport is rising weekly. There is now 40 players on the team. The club was formed three months ago and since then players have been engaged in active training.

The task has not been easy. The first obstacle is the game itself. Very popular in Western Europe and the Southern Hemisphere, rugby is still not well known in the Arab World. However, rugby teams do exist in Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria. They have often been formed by foreigners working in these countries.

But locals soon picked up. Showing great enthusiasm for the sport, they adapted themselves quickly. Dubai for example, hosts 7-a-side world annual rugby competition. A Jordanian

team took part in 1996 competition.

A rugby team was first formed in Jordan in 1988. But it soon faded out because of lack of an infrastructure. Today, the aim of the handful of rugby addicts is to create a solid association that will enable the sport to last, and grow into a major event in the country.

One of the difficulties has been to find enough players to form a 15-player team. Today, it boasts of about 40 from six nationalities: Jordanian, English, Irish, New Zealand, American, and French. The trainers of the team are Mike Sedman, and Robbie Robinson. The latter is also in charge of physical preparation.

This "patchwork" team played its first game at the end of last February.

Two games were organized against teams at the British Akrotiri military base in Cyprus, on 26 February and 1 March. On this occasion, a group of about 40 people, players and supporters, made the Cyprus trip that was sponsored by Royal Jordanian, Forte Grand Hotel and the British Bank.

After months of training and practice, this was a major test for the team. Four of the 19 players had not played a full game before or indeed seen the

size of a standard rugby pitch. All the matches were played at a furious pace but once the new players settled down, they adapted quickly to the game and played with great skill, three of them scoring tries. The first game was drawn at 20 points each and the team from Jordan was very unfortunate to lose the second at 23-20. This was nevertheless a remarkable achievement in view of the relative inexperience of the side and enabled the coach to assess the overall ability of the side for future games.

To improve, the team now requires better training facilities and, equally important, to recruit more players and increase the profile of the game in Jordan. The side is grateful to the Sport City which has provided an area for a full rugby pitch to be created. When complete it should enable the game of rugby to develop in Jordan and for foreign teams to participate in the country. Perhaps more importantly, it will enable Jordanian sportsmen to discover the game and persuade them to join the association.

The sport is expanding rapidly in the world and in the region. It is hoped that this embryonic team will grow in size and ability enabling Jordan to be internationally representative in this increasingly popular sport. ■

INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

Once again, the computer customs debate

ONCE AGAIN, the issue of taxes and tariffs on computer equipment is being raised by Jordanian computer distributors, as the Government has recently announced customs duties that include some 216 goods, among which are "electrical appliances".

Over the last decade, the Government has structured the customs system in such a way that Jordanian importers of computer equipment end up paying up to 35 percent on their imports.

The result has been relatively expensive hardware offered to the Jordanian buyer. Here it is important to note that the direct taxes paid are extremely minimal, constituting under five percent, with the remaining 30 percent or so being paid as additional fees. So, and for all practical purposes, the Government claims that taxes in Jordan on computers are exceptionally low!

Well, faced with this somewhat frustrating situation, computer distributors have demanded for many years that taxes and fees be restructured to better encourage the computerization of Jordanian society. The recent customs announcement states generally that "customs are to be reduced from five to 10 percent". It is a bit difficult to imagine how that reflects on computer equipment, as the direct customs rate was already pretty low. In addition, the Government normally makes up for customs decreases by increasing the sales tax! So, it seems that things will remain pretty much the same.

Also, the "customs" discussion is heating up with much more original software being imported, as part of the anti-piracy trend in the country. So, how is the customs department handling this software? Well, according to claims from some software importers, taxation is relatively high. Now, surely that will encourage smugglers to bring pirated copies into the country, therefore committing two illegalities (smuggling and possession of pirated material)!

Personally, I can understand the pressures that the Customs Dept. may be under from all economic sectors in the country, who continually complain on the relatively high customs and fees on imported products, but when it comes to computers and information technology, we are hoping for more of a listening ear; after all, computing is absolutely necessary today for any nation to advance!

This reminds me of a time, some years ago, when modems were classified as "forbidden equipment", as they were considered to be a "threat to military security".

Those days are long gone and now we are enjoying an Internet and on-line services revolution in Jordan at the forefront of which is a massive drive among the Jordanian public to purchase modems. Anyway, getting back to the issue of governmental restrictions that may, unintentionally in most cases, cause a depression to the Jordanian computer business; rather than complain, Jordanian computer companies better organize themselves and get their voice across to the Government.

This is possible through the Jordan Computer Society, for example, as a professional society that could take up this matter. Anyway, with a general direction worldwide towards freedom of trade and lowering the tariffs on all sorts of products, it's only a matter of time before Jordan's customs department changes its taxation and fees structure. Will this spell great news in Jordanian computer users?

I don't know, but I would like to think so, or else Jordanian hardware and software buyers will continue to face a serious problem: which is the fact that computer technology is still 35 percent more out of reach than in many neighboring countries.

You know, considering the added expenses we pay, it's a pleasure to know that we are a moderately computerized nation! Now, that's a sign of persistence. ■

The

Sudden end of the Kabarit era

News Analysis

Weather Outlook

■ The weather will be partly cloudy and cold most of the Kingdom on Thursday with temperatures reaching 8 degrees during the day and dropping to minus 2 at night. The weather will improve slightly on Friday with sunny skies. By day will remain unseasonably cold (high 13, low 5). Unstable weather will dominate the beginning of the week with partly cloudy skies and moderate temperatures. Local showers are expected on Sunday and Monday. The weather should improve by mid-week with a high pressure moving in from the west.